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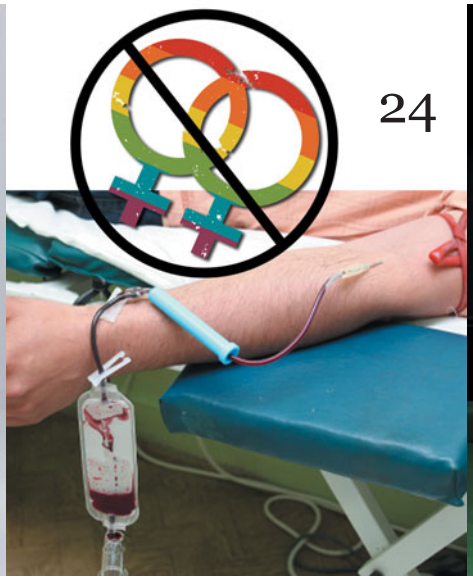

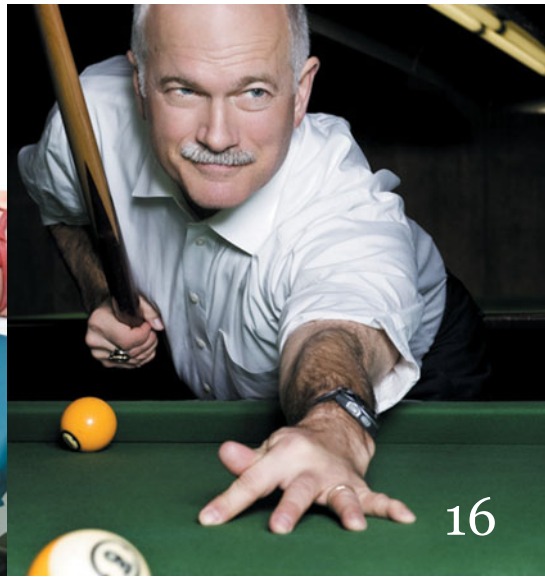

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Look out Manhunt, Twitter and Facebook… here comes **GRINDR!**

GRINDR, the largest all-male mobile location-based networking service, reached its landmark 500,000th member in February and is still growing. Wow!

Since the inception of this innovative social networking application in early 2009, no less than one year, this network has undeniably changed the game of social networking for gay and bisexual men around the world.

From a marketing perspective, these guys are signing up 1,000 new users on a bad day and approximately 2,000 on an average day. And the percentage of daily new users grows exponentially with each passing day.

GRINDR's extraordinary growth is as revolutionary as the app itself, and I believe that it has significantly changed the ways in which guys are choosing to meet up with their friends, make new ones, or find a friendly face in locations they are visiting. Whether you just want to know if any of your friends are nearby or are looking to see if there are other gay guys in your neck of the woods, Grindr has become the easiest, quickest and most simple way for guys to meet each other.

Joel Simkhai, GRINDR's founder and CEO says, "GRINDR's growth has come from one source—our users. GRINDR users are telling their friends about GRINDR. They are blogging and Twittering about GRINDR, and posting their success stories on their Facebook status updates."

And every other application, website, or subscription-based gay business is green with envy. Maybe at this point I should casually mention that OUTLOOKS has subscriptions available too. OK, enough self-marketing—back to GRINDR.

The app, which runs on iPhone and iPod touch, uses location-based technology like GPS, cell towers and Wi-Fi to determine the user's location. A quick tap delivers profiles, photos, and information of nearby guys. A user's profile is available in seconds, as are chat functions and sending additional photos or even a user's map location.

Simkhai adds, "We've been amazed with not only our growth but also by how engaged GRINDR users are. A large number of users launch GRINDR hourly and daily. Some guys leave it open for several hours a day. And, when they change their location, they will launch GRINDR again to see who's nearby." An unprecedented 30 percent of users check their GRINDR daily; 44 percent check their accounts weekly."

"We've also been astonished that nearly half of our users are outside the United States. There are thousands of GRINDR guys in London, Paris, Tokyo and Sydney. Even Tehran, Iran and Astana, Kazakhstan have GRINDR guys."

At last count, only 54 percent of GRINDR users are based in the United States, which is amazing considering the original intent of the product was the US social networking market. GRINDR reports that 17 percent of the current membership is from the United Kingdom and nine percent in Australia. France and Japan take the fourth and fifth top spots respectively. Our "home and native land" is not that far behind either and membership trends show the application is steadily growing speed and moving westward.

It seems that users love the no-hassle membership, simple interface and that privacy is always controlled by the user-users can share as much or as little info as they desire.

To fill the need of GRINDR users who want even more access to guys nearby—there is now a premium (extra) version for only $2.99 a month. GRINDR X(tra) lets users see up to 200 more guys who are close-by (100 more than the free version allows) and it's ad free.

If even half the current members upgrade to the X(tra) version at $2.99 a month… well, you can do the math. And it is 100 percent ad free.

However, from my perspective, unless you are planning to throw a really, really big underwear party, 100 or so guys nearby should be more than enough to get to know.

That's how I see it anway.

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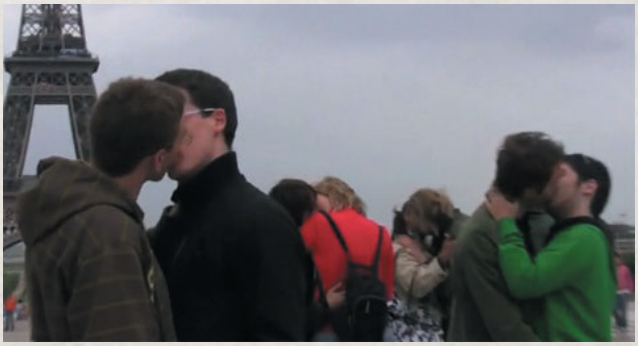
Increase in Anti-Gay Violence in France?

Two incidents in recent months are causing concern for gay rights activists in France. In February, a Kiss In was held in several cities including Paris. The original location for the city of lights was to be in front of Notre Dame Cathedral—but a Christian fundamentalist group learned of the plan and called for a violent response, employing several homophobic epithets to describe the proposed Kiss In participants. The police suggested a change of location and most went to Place Saint Michél where the Kiss In proceeded without incident. Some, however, went to Notre Dame, where they were kicked and hit with motorbike helmets.

Then in Montpellier, an organization called Le Refuge, which welcomes young gay men who have been kicked out of their homes by their families because of their sexual orientation, received a death threat by mail. Full of hate-filled language and describing gays as mentally ill who deserved to be put away in mental hospitals or done away with permanently, the letter has been given to the authorities who are taking the matter very seriously.

Some describe the events as isolated incidents, while others see them as examples of a general rise in homophobic violence.



Passing of Fashion Legend

The fashion world was stunned by the news that Alexander McQueen, the renowned designer, had committed suicide, just days after his mother, Joyce, died. McQueen, apparently distraught with grief, took his own life by hanging himself. The openly gay clothing artist was famous for his eccentric and beautiful clothing lines and his unconventional attitudes toward the fashion world. Born in a working class neighbourhood, McQueen first worked as an apprentice for a tailor. His later rise to prominence was meteoric, and his loss is deeply felt by the fashion industry.

Prom Cancelled to Prevent Lesbian Couple from Attending

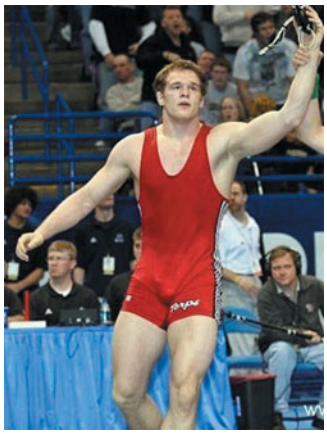
A Mississippi school district has cancelled a school's senior prom in order to keep Constance McMillen, an eighteen-year-old student, from wearing a tux and taking her girlfriend to the dance. The American Civil Liberties Union has filed a lawsuit on her behalf to require the school to reinstate the dance. McMillen says some of her classmates are blaming her for the cancellation, but the ACLU say that the school is guilty of violating McMillen's rights.

A possible solution may come from Sean Cummings, a New Orleans hotel owner who has offered to bus the students to one of his properties and host a free prom for them there.

Since the news broke, the shy student from Mississippi, has become a media darling appearing on daytime shows including *Ellen*, where she told her story again and was given a $30,000.00 scholarship by Tonic.com. A Facebook group supporting McMillen has over a quarter of a million members, and a group called The American Humanists have raised $20,000.00 to go toward holding a prom for all of the students. When McMillen appeared, via satellite, on the *Wanda Sykes* television program, Sykes asked if McMillen and her girlfriend would fly to Los Angeles and be a presenter at the GLAAD awards on April 17th. Sykes is to receive the Stephen F. Kolzak award and wants McMillen to be the presenter. And if that were not enough to keep her busy, McMillen will participate in the Safe Schools Advocacy Summit, presented by GLSEN, which works to fight discrimination and anti-LGBT bullying. The young woman from small town Mississippi is having a big impact these days.

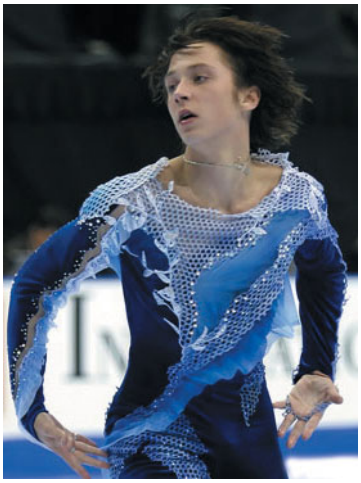
Straight Ally for Gay Rights

Sport is often seen as the last bastion of homophobia—but this discriminatory attitude won't last long if Hudson Taylor has anything to say about it. The twenty-three-year-old university student, who is also a championship wrestler, is an outspoken advocate for LGBT rights, even wearing a Human Rights Campaign logo on his wrestling helmet. He has taken some ribbing from teammates—but no one makes queer slurs around Taylor without being called out on it. And he is earnest in his desire to rid sports of homophobic attitudes. Both he and his fiancée are strong supporters of HRC and other human rights organizations. Taylor proposed to her by presenting her with a signed copy of a Martin Luther King book the evening after they had been to see the movie, *Milk*.



Stars on Ice Not Friendly to Weir

Flamboyant figure skater, Johnny Weir, is claiming that he has been rejected by Stars on Ice because of his perceived sexual orientation. Weir, well-known for his flashy costumes and outspokenness has refused to discuss if he is gay or not. But he claims that the figure skating company does not think he is "family friendly" enough, an assertion a spokesperson for Stars on Ice firmly denies, saying instead that there just is not enough room in the cast. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD) says that this denial does not ring true, given the fact that Weir is a two-time Olympic athlete and a three-time American champion.



Gay Brazilian Gains Asylum

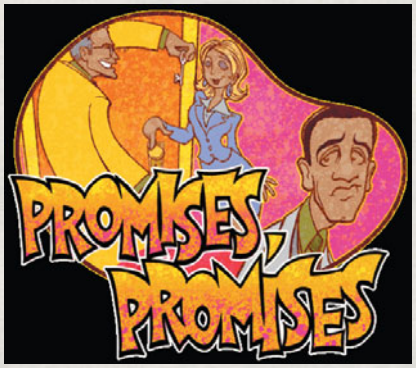
Many of us think of Brazil as the land of sunny beaches, friendly people and beautiful countryside; but, for Augusto Pereira de Souza, his homeland became a place of fear, menace and violence. De Souza spoke during his asylum hearing of beating, attacks and threats on his life. The violence was perpetrated by skinheads and other groups, and even by the police. He realized that to stay in Brazil would likely mean his death. Brazil has a very high hate crime and murder rate against LGBT persons, according to a gay rights group in Brazil. De Souza's asylum grant to remain in the US was facilitated by Columbia Law School's Sexuality and Gender Law clinic.

Feud Over?

It is reported that Boy George and George Michael are speaking again after a twenty-five year silence. The feud reportedly began when the lead singer for The Culture Club had some hostile words for George Michael, the Wham singer, for passing himself off as straight in order to gain female fans. This led to a heated reply from Michael and the two did not speak for the next quarter of a century. Recently, however, Boy George told the Daily Star that the two are once again on good terms.

Sean Hayes Gay? No!

In the category of news that isn't really new, Sean Hayes, who portrayed Jack MacFarland on the popular TV series, *Will & Grace*, has finally, officially, come out. In a recent interview with The Advocate, Hayes discusses his life and career and the pros and cons of playing such a flamboyantly gay character, and his soon-to-take-place debut on Broadway in a revival of *Promises, Promises*.



Swedish Politician's Drag Persona in Trouble

Frederick Federley, a Swedish member of parliament, is well-known for dressing in drag and for his frequent refusal of offers from airline companies. So, when questioned about why he had accepted a free trip to the Canary Islands, sponsored in part by Norwegian Airlines, Federley stated that it was not he, but rather his drag persona, Ursula, who had taken a holiday in the sun.

Cape Town PRIDE Parade

In early March, thousands of celebrants took to the streets of Cape Town, South Africa for the city's annual PRIDE Parade. Amid the joyful floats, dancing and pounding music was a more sombre tone as many participants carried signs decrying homophobia and intolerance. South Africa is unique in Africa in providing protection for its queer citizens—but attitudes remain slow to change. The revellers in Cape Town are well aware of the proposed "kill the gays" bill in Uganda and the arrest of the two men in Malawi for taking part in a same-sex marriage ceremony. One of the banners summed up the feelings of the Cape Town PRIDE group: Hate is UnAfrican!

Don't Ask, Don't Tell and When to Shut Up

During the hearings of the Armed Services Committee to hear testimony on how the controversial Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) law can be lifted, one statement stood out for its bold attack on gay soldiers and the country of the Netherlands. General John Sheehan (retired) said that poor morale among the Dutch soldiers contributed to the Srebrenica massacre in Bosnia, where in 1995, over 8,000 people were killed while the area was supposed to be under the control of the Dutch. Sheehan said that he was told by Dutch authorities that allowing gays into the military had undermined morale and weakened the Dutch forces.

The Senate Committee chairman, Carl Levin, shook his head and called the remarks "totally off-target." In this, the Dutch authorities agree and they were quick to refute what they called "complete nonsense" and said the thorough investigation that followed the Srebrenica event did not include any reference to sexual orientation in its report.

Elsewhere, Lt. Dan Choi and Captain Jim Pietrangelo chained themselves to the White House fence to protest DADT. The original march had been organized by the Human Rights Campaign and by comedienne, Kathy Griffin, who was filming the event for television.

This act of civil disobedience resulted in both Choi and Pietrangelo being arrested. They refused to plead guilty and pay the fine, opting instead to fight the charge in court later in April.

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Couch Talk

The Sexualization of the Transgendered

I remember well my formative years. Back in 1969 when I was 13 years old, Dr. David Reuben's book was published. It was called *Everything You Wanted to Know about Sex but Were Afraid to Ask*. Wow, for a kid with crazy hormones and a pecker that stayed hard even in math class, I was excited to read anything about sex, let alone the "definitive" guide on the subject. I somehow managed to purchase a copy (back then, it was easier to buy cigarettes than something that would be construed as "porn" by many adults).

I raced to find the chapter on homosexuality, and indeed, there it was now facing me. Dr. Reuben's conclusion? Homosexuality was a sickness and its entire focus was on the penis, and not the person. I gulped hard at reading that for some reason (ahem), but I knew that I was more than my penis even at that age (although in a "head" contest, the little head might have won!). However, the image of being mentally ill and criminally minded (it was also illegal to engage in homosexual acts before 1969) left a mammoth imprint in my psyche, and I became unable to come out until 1993. By then, I couldn't take it anymore.

The same sexualization has occurred within the last 20 years for a segment of the transgendered population. Before I continue, you need to know two things:

1. In May, 2009, I expressed my view in *Couch Talk* that we should reject theories that hurt us. I wrote then, "We need to challenge theories that divide us or pathologize us, especially when those theories are suggested by those who are not part of our community."

2. Also, it is noteworthy that the diagnosis of gender identity disorder did not appear in the diagnostic system until homosexuality was removed, leading some to believe that transsexuals would become the next target group. I argue here that this has indeed occurred.

What has happened? In 1989, Ray Blanchard published his theory that suggested that there are two types of male-to-female (MtF) transsexuals: **(a)** the homosexual MtFs who are exclusively attracted to men, and **(b)** the nonhomosexual MtFs who are asexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. The homosexual variety was usually effeminate while the nonhomosexual type was not. Blanchard proposed that the nonhomosexual transsexuals (note how the word "sexual" appears twice in the descriptor) were motivated to change their gender because of autogynephilia. Autogynephilia was described as a fetish or paraphilia, whereby the man was very sexually excited by the thought of himself as a woman. So this type of desire to transition, then, would be about a fetish gone wild.

To this I say "rubbish." This is oversexualizing a person's deep conviction to change genders, a conviction that has been longstanding, intense, and unrelenting. Without question, autogynephilia is experienced by many transsexual individuals. Blanchard had theorized that autogynephilia only occurred in men, but recent research by Moser has shown that it is also experienced by a significant percentage of women. Furthermore, autogynephilia dramatically decreases after gender reassignment surgery. Well, come on—it isn't just the surgery but the fact that when men are given estrogen, their sex drive decreases significantly.

Testosterone, on the other hand, is a sex drive enhancer (I just wish I could get more of it!). Most men masturbate—simple fact. Naturally, if you are a MtF transsexual person, you are going to masturbate envisioning yourself as a woman. If you are turned on by women, you are going to imagine having a woman go down on you. If you are turned on by guys, you are going to imagine a man fucking you (yum).

The one part that is confusing for many transpeople who experience autogynephilia is that they say they are more attracted to women, yet they still fantasize they are being fucked by a guy while in a female body. Why is that? What follows is my opinion only, so keep that in mind—okay?

We were nearly all raised to be heterosexual. Most people want to fit in, conform, and not rock the boat. The idea of opposite-sex behaviour being good and same-sex behaviour being wrong has been pushed into our psyches since we can remember. If you want to conform and still have a good fantasy life, do you want to mostly imagine the things that are socially unacceptable? Of course not. Instead, you'll focus on that which helps you conform.

Illustration: Mark - Slap Upside The Head
www.slapupsidethehead.com

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MtF transsexual individuals who have worked hard all their lives to "pass" by acting as heterosexual as they can (something I called *heterofacsimile* in my first book) are not going to imagine themselves as women engaging in lots of same-sex behaviour with another woman. No, I believe MtF transsexuals want to be fucked, and I mean mostly vaginally. The same applies for straight women too, right? In other words, I believe the MtF transsexual who comes across as having mostly male interests is simply a person who wants to conform more than the homosexual variety that Blanchard writes about. Furthermore, we know from research that many MtF transsexual individuals experience a change in their sexual orientation at some point during their transition, and this is usually in the direction of more interest in other males. This would support my hypothesis that they are simply greater conformists (or perhaps in greater denial) of their interest in men (just as many gay men worked hard at denying and repressing their interest in men before they came out). Lastly, Veale and colleagues found in their research that MtF autogynephilic transsexual individuals scored higher on sexual attraction to males than did the non-autogynephilic males, which completely contradicts Blanchard's theory.

A "good" theory is one that does not trivialize our "selves" in any sense. A good theory is respectful of the fact that queer people have been marginalized, oppressed, humiliated, denigrated, and ostracized for centuries. I *am* saying that a good theory is also political: When it comes to casting its spell on others and leading others to think less of us, it should be rejected as ethically, morally, and socially unacceptable. Instead, we need to promote theories that respect multiculturalism and diversity, and these theories will likely come from those who are part of our community and not from those gazing at us and finding pathology at every turn. Just as we no longer oversexualize gay people as David Reuben did 40 years ago, and Canadian society no longer views non-Christians or non-Whites as inferior, it is time psychology stops sexualizing and oversimplifying the experience of transsexual people. If you want to pick on a group, pick on the dominant culture and leave the most vulnerable of the queer community alone from such unacceptable and derogatory viewpoints. O

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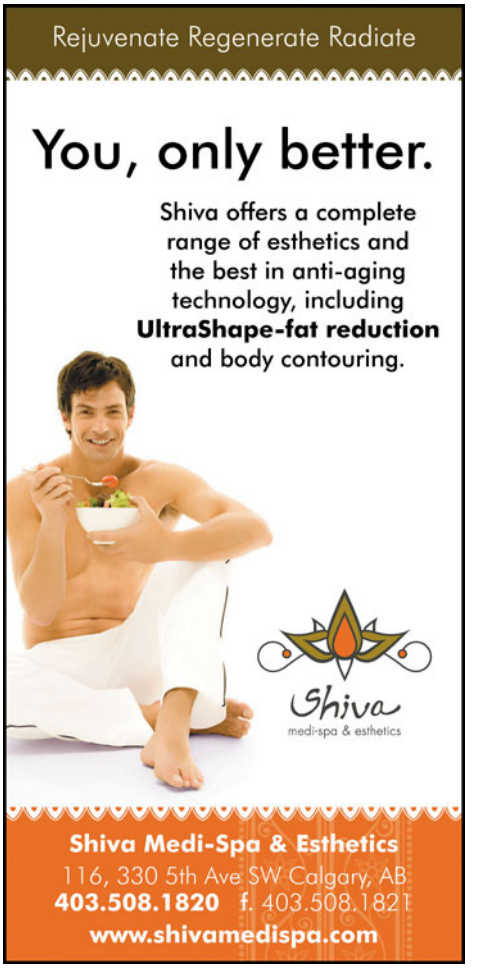

Illustration: Perry Mah

Mistress Manners

Dear Mistress Manners:

I'm not gay but I read this paper because I'm a straight ally. I have gay friends and I'm always on the sidelines at PRIDE. My question isn't about advice. I recently became a mom and I realize that my kid is going to grow up with plenty of gay influences in her life—and I'm okay with that. But here's the thing: Last week, I was reading a parenting website and I couldn't believe how many parents on one of the discussion threads were afraid their kid would grow up to be homosexual. In this day and age! I was outraged. And then I started to wonder what I would do if my daughter came to me in fifteen or twenty years and told me that she was a lesbian. I like to think I would be fine with it—but the forum made me question myself. What if I'm not fine with it?

~ Frazzled Mom

Dear Frazzled Mom:

First of all, congratulations! You have a daughter and you're raising her to be open-minded. This is huge, and worthy of all the praise that Mistress Manners can send your way. It sounds as though motherhood is also a new gig for you, and, from what I understand, it's no picnic. And it can make even the most confident parent squirm with guilt and anxiety. So, my advice to you is: breathe. Relax.

As for your daughter's sexuality, you're right to point out this crucial tidbit—you probably won't have to deal with her emotional or physical ties to anyone of any gender for at least another decade, and, by then you'll know so much more about her.

It's natural—as far as Mistress Manners understands it—to be protective of one's offspring and to want the best for them. It's your biological destiny to do everything in your power to protect your youngster from harm and to want her to have a good and safe life. A big house with a swimming pool in the burbs wouldn't hurt either. And the truth is that many lesbians have a difficult path. We still live in a patriarchy. Women don't have the same earning power as men. They are invisible and are subject to levels of discrimination that men cannot know. No matter how many *L Word* episodes you watch, it's hard to ignore the reality that most lesbians don't live glamorous lives. Many struggle with overlapping layers of oppression. It's not all Olivia Cruises all the time.

That said, things are changing rapidly. The Ellens and Rachel Maddows of the world are offering a great chance to reconfigure how lesbians are perceived. There are tons of power lesbians in the world—women who achieve enormous success, and women whose parents don't need to worry about them for a second (even though they probably do). And you, dear Frazzled Mom, are contributing to a world that values diversity in terms of sexual preference. So, whether your daughter turns out to be queer or not, you are aiding queers of her generation simply by being an accepting and non-judgmental person. That's all you have to do.

Please contact Mistress Manners with your questions at: **mistressmanners@gmail.com**

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Thoughts from the Hill

~ DALE SMITH

When Access to Information documents obtained by *The Canadian Press* showed that Jason Kenney, the Minister of Immigration, likely had a hand in removing gay content from the new citizenship guide against the advice of his senior bureaucrats, it made headlines in mainstream papers across the country for several days. The guide's only reference to gays and lesbians in Canada was a sidebar photo of Olympic gold medallist Mark Tewksbury, the text identifying him as a prominent gay rights activist.

This coverage contrasts to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and Supreme Court challenges on same-sex marriage bans making headlines in the United States. Canada has allowed gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military since 1992, while this debate is raging anew south of the border.

This month's question: What do you think this says about the Canadian public? And, given that the Manning Institute recently published a poll that said that Canadians' social values on things like traditional marriage were moving more to the right, do you believe their numbers?

NDP MP Bill Siksay (Burnaby-Douglas, BC): I still think Canada is light years ahead of the United States when it comes to the question of GLBT human rights, and I believe that they're doing all they can to catch-up with where we have long-established policies. That's been proven by the controversy around the citizenship guide. There was strong public support for a citizenship guide that actually represented the reality of the position of gay and lesbian people in Canadian society and the issues around gay and lesbian marriage. That proved to be something Canadians supported through the public airing of that issue.

I'm not concerned about the Manning Institute's study. I think they got the answers that they were looking for. There doesn't seem to be any attempt to turn back the clock on same-sex marriage. That's firmly entrenched now. I don't think it was the problem that the people on the right predicted it was going to be; so that may be their number. However, I don't see that as correlating to any movement in Canadian society to turn back the clock on that issue or any other issue of GLBT human rights. The problem with that survey may be that ordinary people don't normally think of themselves as right/left, and those categories don't mean much to average Canadians. It means a lot around here; but I'm not sure how much that means in the broad public discourse.

Liberal MP Scott Brison (Kings-Hants, Nova Scotia): I think Preston Manning, as usual, is wrong. I believe that diversity and equality, as defended by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, has become a source of pride, not the source of embarrassment it seems to be for people like Preston Manning and Jason Kenney.

What some of the polling is indicating is that the institution of the family is being valued more by Canadians. I view the institution of the family as being incredibly important, and I am very family-oriented. I value the family; but I do not like it when the term "family values" is used as a euphemism for prejudice. The whole notion of same-sex marriage is that more Canadians can live in loving, close-knit families and will benefit from the value of family. In some ways, Preston Manning's glee at the rise of the importance of family ought not be inconsistent with the continued celebration of diversity in Canada.

I think that's an important distinction. Many of Preston Manning's cohorts over the years have always tried to pit families against gays and lesbians, and in fact, gays and lesbians are part of functioning, loving families, and it is destructive for people like Preston Manning to pit the family unit against gays and lesbians. To the contrary—gays and lesbians are part of, and help define, Canadian families.

Conservative Senator Nancy Ruth (Ontario - Cluny): I think western society has become more conservative in difficult economic times. I base this thought on Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Maslow said that when folk are frightened of life, they hunker down and deal with issues like security, housing, food supply, and jobs. Only when their basic security needs are met do they deal with issues like culture and human rights.

LGBT rights are well-established in this country, in spite of incursions and painful exclusions, and I believe it will be impossible to remove them.

We have just seen a huge backlash against restoring O Canada to its original gender-neutral language. Perhaps it too was a result of the Manning poll's conservatism. There are times when opportunities for the expansion of rights slip by, as they did in O Canada, but issues don't die. Nor will LGBT rights. O

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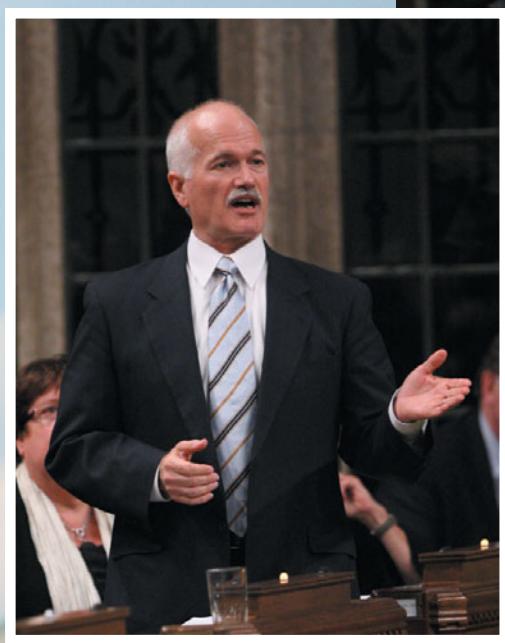
Jack Layton
A Fighter Undeterred

~ DALE SMITH

In his office on the sixth floor of the Centre Block, Jack Layton has just come from another raucous Question Period and a tightly packed media scrum outside of the House of Commons. He doesn't look tired from the engagement, but rather relaxed and in very good cheer.

Layton, the leader of the federal New Democratic Party for the past seven years, was born in Montréal and grew up in a town called Hudson, Québec, which he considered "insulated and isolated from all things controversial." But observing controversial things happening engaged him, and he wrote two books on the subject before winding up in downtown Toronto, teaching at Ryerson.



"I got involved in downtown Toronto progressive politics," Layton recalls. "That included everything from fighting for public transit and affordable housing and working with tenants to opposing discrimination, which is, for some of your readers, when I first began to become involved in discrimination against lesbians and gays. In particular,at that time we were focused on gay men who were being beaten up by the police. At the same time, blacks were dealing with shootings by police, and Sikhs were dealing with discrimination by police. In fact, we formed a rather unlikely coalition including all three groups."

In the midst of this, the bathhouse raids happened, and Layton came out in support of the community as a straight ally.

"One thing led to another, and I ended up on city council representing the downtown, including the gay village," Layton says. "At the time, it wasn't fully out, and I had the opportunity to participate in the coming out, as it were, of the gay village, the gay businesses, [and] PRIDE Day."

Getting PRIDE to happen at Church and Wellesley was one thing—but the AIDS crisis was another.

"I found myself as chairman of the board of health, and suddenly, I'm touring bathhouses, arguing that they should stay open, not be shut down like some people were saying, and saying we'd better get condoms out, and we should start working with groups like the AIDS Committee of Toronto, saying we should get money to these groups so that they could start talking the safe-sex agenda."

Along the way, his wife, Olivia Chow, was elected to office, and one of her assistants, Susan, was going through a transition, which exposed Layton to issues of the trans community. He even set time aside at his wedding to Chow, in order to speak out about same-sex marriage.

"We dreamed of a day when gay couples would able to express their love publicly in the form of marriage—if that was what they chose—the way we were being able to do," Layton says. "Never did I realize that I would have the opportunity to actually vote on that legislation in the House of Commons, to whip that vote on behalf of New Democrats on something that fundamental. That was a truly special day."

Given the progress made toward equality for the queer community in recent years, Layton still sees a role for his party in advocacy.

"We're the only party that has an LGBTT critic, and we're very fortunate to have Bill Siksay carrying that banner for us right now, following in the footsteps of some of the great advocates. In particular, I'm thinking of Svend [Robinson] of course, and of Libby's [Davies] good work," Layton says. "He's going right out to the leading edge, as I think we have tried always to do, to deal with the transgendered and transsexual discrimination issues. And our proposition before the House of Commons is coming up for the debate."

That bill would see the gender identity and gender expression as prohibited grounds for discrimination, and would be included in the definition of hate speech.

"That's a chapter that has still some distance to go before it's closed," Layton says. "You saw, with the government's censoring of the citizenship guide, that we've still got some issues there in terms of the full recognition by our society of what's been accomplished here. We've got issues around

Photos: courtesy Jack Layton's Constituency Office.

refugees, because naturally, given the more open approach that has been taken here in Canada, some people are going to want to come from countries where not only is it not open, but you could be exposed to the death penalty, just for being who you are."

Layton feels that our refugee and immigration processes need to have a greater awareness of queer issues. As for his own party, Layton feels that they are proactive in recruiting members from the broader community, and that they get input from an active GLBTT committee in order to maintain their touch with the queer community.

Nevertheless, the political landscape has changed in recent years.

"Back in the day, if I can use that old language, you wouldn't have found openly gay people in some of the other political parties. I can think of some in particular," Layton says. "The NDP was always particularly associated with some of these leading-edge issues—but now that you've got members of the community in most of the political parties, the debate tends to take on a different character, I suppose, around some of these issues. The community has matured and has decided to be involved in different political processes and different political parties."

As well, some who might have supported a pro-big business government may not have openly identified as gay until recently, which shifts the way that gay politics are perceived.

That isn't to say that the NDP haven't had their own share of problems with the queer community. In the previous parliament, the issue of the NDP's support for a government bill that raised the age of consent angered many members of the community, and their own MP, Bill Siksay, faced censure for voting against the party's wishes on the matter.

Nevertheless, Layton feels that the party has since moved on.

"It's not being raised personally with me a lot right now, and we worked quite hard to try to change what the Conservatives had identified. Joe Comartin, our justice critic, actually accomplished a lot with some of the changes that he was able to make at the committee," Layton says.

"We're watching it, of course, but it's not being raised with me—it's as though we've moved on. It's like the gay marriage issue isn't particularly being raised with me. But I think with what we're seeing in the United States, we need to be very vigilant, because who's to say what would happen if you had, God forbid, a Conservative majority government for four years, what might take place on an issue like that. I don't want to be a fear monger, but on the other hand, the Conservatives are the best fear mongers in the world, and it wouldn't take much for them to whip up some sentiments if they chose to.

"I think, as with all human rights, you can never assume that it's a one-way channel. We've seen in other countries where rights that had been won are then rolled back—so we've got to stay on top of all those issues."

Currently, Layton is battling prostate cancer—but that hasn't deterred him from his active role in the party, or in political life. He says that the experience has left him with a greater awareness of the toxins human activity is putting into the environment, for starters.

"In addition to that, there's no question that our diet and the way we live can also have an impact—the evidence is very, very strong," Layton says. "And I suspect those two things actually relate, because if you talk heavy red meat consumption, which I was totally convinced was the thing to do—God bless Dr. Atkins. Of course, he died—but we still followed his advice on how to live."

He is using the experience to encourage men to get tested and to look out for their health. It's also given him a greater appreciation for Canadian health care, and the fact that, even in a factious House of Commons, people put aside their differences when there is a deeper issue at play.

"The House of Commons were all on their feet giving me a very warm welcome when I came back, and that is the spirit that Canadians would want to know exists around here, and certainly how they treat each other." O

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from Peter's Pulpit

Popes or Prosecutors:

No Man is Infallible

~ PETER CARLYLE-GORDGE

The Pope claims he is infallible and his decisions come from "on high" so they are not to be questioned.

This arrant nonsense was invented in the late 19th Century. Before then, popes did not claim to be infallible. Besides, given the appalling record of priestly buggery against young boys and Cardinal Ratzinger's well-documented attempts to cover it all up and avoid responsibility by a church anxious to avoid lawsuits, it is clear to all that the Pope and his followers are deluded and in denial.

As I write, the Vatican's Chief Exorcist is claiming that Satan has invaded the Vatican. That follows another homosexual scandal with a Gentleman Usher of the Pope found to be consorting with young male prostitutes, assignations arranged by a member of the Vatican choir.

Meanwhile, a further homosexual scandal has also broken out in Germany where the Pope's brother, Georg Ratzinger, may be questioned as a witness in an inquiry into the Regensburg Cathedral choir sex abuse scandal.

Infallibility and adherence to the Truth is a spiritual realm, known perhaps only to God himself/herself. All of mankind is corrupt to some degree—some more than others.

The state and Crown prosecutors are particularly challenged when it comes to admitting that they are wrong. Legal infallibility, like papal infallibility, is a fairy tale. And in Canada, we have had many wrongful convictions where government officials fought tooth and nail to defeat the truth and justice.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of my first meeting with Joyce Milgaard. Back in 1980, very few had heard the name David Milgaard and he was not a cause célèbre in the media.

That bandwagon only came years later, as did his exoneration. Milgaard was convicted in Saskatoon in 1970 of a horrible stabbing murder of a young nurse. But he still maintained his innocence a decade after his conviction, so I familiarized myself with his case. I spent hundreds of hours with Joyce Milgaard, dissecting trial transcripts and trailing around Saskatchewan with her, interviewing old witnesses.

No one believed us when we said they had convicted the wrong man. We knew for sure David had been railroaded by a corrupt, prejudiced system with circled wagons.

In 1982, I was the first writer to suggest in print that he was innocent and possibly the victim of both police and civilian wrongdoing. That was in a 20,000-word essay in the book *Winnipeg Eight*. The man who prosecuted Milgaard obtained a copy and wrote on the front: ***Crap***.

That facsimile was produced at the official inquiry into the case 25 years later. In fact, everything I said in 1982 turned out to be true.

By 1983, I was exhausted but certain that Milgaard was quite innocent. I took a sabattical in England, but kept up with the case, even persuading the *Fifth Estate* to begin investigating it. Eventually, Joyce got the mass media on board, questions were asked in Parliament and ultimately, the Supreme Court overturned his conviction. Saskatchewan refused a new trial—but the wonders of DNA science finally forced even the legal establishment to admit that they were wrong and Milgaard was awarded $10 milllion.

David Milgaard and Peter Carlyle-Gordge

I was on the stand for three days at the eventual Milgaard Inquiry, which cost taxpayers over $11 million and took two years. The final inquiry report was mostly a whitewash job, which a Toronto lawyer had warned me it would be. Commissioner Edward MacCallum cleared Saskatoon police, the RCMP, Crown prosecutors and federal justice officials of wrongdoing.

Indeed, both Joyce Milgaard and I were given a hard time on the stand by lawyers for the police. It was even suggested that David's freedom might have been obtained more quickly had Joyce not gone to the media and floated conspiracy theories. What a laughable and tragic joke that was.

In fact Art Roberts, a senior Calgary detective, had a theory that Milgaard was guilty and Roberts scared David's young travelling companions—Ron Wilson and Nichol John—into signing false statements implicating Milgaard.

If that isn't police misconduct, I don't know what is.

The reality is that Milgaard would still be in prison had his mother not turned the case into a media and political circus. No one in authority was willing to listen to our evidence.

Saskatoon police totally ignored the fact that, in 1980, the ex-wife of serial rapist Larry Fisher came to Saskatoon police saying that she thought he was the real killer and she had some fairly convincing evidence. Fisher was eventually convicted.

Since then, many more wrongful convictions surfaced, including some in Winnipeg prosecuted by George Dangerfield, a man with a dodgy track record that includes using unreliable jailhouse informants.

Add the cases of Steven Truscott, Donald Marshall, Thomas Sophonow, Kyle Unger, Erin Walsh, William Mullins-Johnson, Robert Baltovich and several falsely convicted on the "expert" (and rubbish) testimony of disgraced Toronto pathologist Dr. Charles Smith.

Since the Milgaard case, four separate judges, including the Milgaard Inquiry Commissioner, have said that Canada needs a totally independent review body to look into dodgy convictions. The Justice Department first examined this idea in 1992 and we are still waiting.

Right now, alleged miscarriages are investigated by a branch of the federal government. That's an invitation to tunnel vision and bias. We need a totally independent review body similar to the one in Britain. But, there is no political will to do this since it isn't a vote getter.

Until the state accepts some humility and admits that it does get things wrong, disrespect for our legal system (not a justice system) will continue to grow.

No man is infallible, and it is offensive to claim otherwise.

Joyce and David Milgaard are friends of Truth. And they are friends of mine. O

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~ DAVID KING

Canadian Trailblazers

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Joan Brennan

Chef, caterer, club owner and now gay wedding show organizer—Joan Brennan is taking Southwestern Ontario by storm, and she's doing it with hospitality.

"Last year, in February," Brennan begins, "I just started wondering, 'Why don't we have a gay wedding show?' So I called a friend Louise, a very successful producer, and asked her if she would get involved with me on it in London. She responded like a lit cigarette just dropped out of her mouth. And we threw it all together in eight weeks."

With the participation of 30 vendors, Brennan's 2009 London event made some waves within the LGBTQ community, in a "Forest City" known as both the "snow belt" and "bible belt" of Southwestern Ontario. Brennan capped off that success just last month, coordinating 50 vendors for Kitchener's first-ever gay wedding show. Now organizing London's second show this May, she's overwhelmed with the sheer possibility of it all.

"People don't always understand that in our lives we are coming out over and over again," says Brennan, who runs London's Elite Catering By Design alongside colleagues like London chef Dani Gruden. "I've been doing that all my life. The idea here is to give people an atmosphere and a culture where they won't have to explain everything and come out a hundred times, and a wedding show that is not overbooked, uncomfortable, or overstuffs people's minds."

Wedding shows are always hot ticket events—but these days, our fascination and debate over gay nuptials has created an undeniable spotlight on the potential of a new "pink buck" niche market. As Brennan confirms, all wedding shows are ultimately about business. But, she adds, the comfort zone created at these expos, along with B2B networking between queer-positive organizations, are entirely unique.

"The networking is fantastic, Brennan notes, "and vendors from Kitchener have been already forming alliances with Londoners. One thing that happened during the fashion show is that we got all shivery, seeing the bride and the bride, and the groom and the groom up there. And when the people involved with putting on the show get teary-eyed, you know it's magical."

Brennan, who comes from a French-Canadian family, was a long-time chef at Toronto's jazzy Montreal Bistro for years before it closed. Although taking on a gay wedding show is a new initiative, it comes just as easily to her as catering, after establishing so many contacts over the years.

"When you work in restaurants, there are always two questions people ask," Brennan laughs. "Do you cater? and is it for sale?"

London's now defunct gay bar Seven (of which Brennan was co-owner) recently closed, joining the London laundry list of gay clubs that have come and gone like the winds of August. Having been involved in all sorts of restaurant and bar opportunities, it hasn't prevented Brennan from seeing Seven reopen under a new name soon, turning the weekend only nightclub into a queer-friendly pub and restaurant with a great patio.

Brennan admits she doesn't always get excited vendors on the phone for the wedding shows, particularly when they disapprove of gay marriage. She spends little time on those calls before moving on ("I'm not in the education business," she rails), and with support coming in from such regionally remote groups like Aylmer's East Elgin Municipal Centre, she's impressed with the show of support. At the recent Kitchener show, Brennan met straight singles that simply popped in from Toronto just to show their approval. Last year in London, she was astounded to see an entire family of seven from Columbia show up—from grandmother down to junior.

"When we saw them, we thought, 'I wonder where they think they are?' But the son, about 35, was gay, and as we had tango demonstrations, he came in and did a couple of sets. It was great."

Tickets for London's event, taking place at the beautiful Windermere Manor, go for only $5 a pop. This year, Brennan has added a "stag and stag" and "doe and doe" event to the mix, to raise funds for the Sexual Assault Centre and Autism Society, and that will get you into the wedding show for free. Still a cozy little expo with booths, patios and a tent for vendors, the London and Kitchener expos are clearly just the beginning.

"I think that eventually this kind of wedding show will peak and perhaps fade like gay bars have already, to some degree," says the always-entrepreneurial Brennan. "For now, this is non-stop. London is London. You have to deal with what you've got—but there are so many ideas for other cities. We are now working on a big name international sponsor, and, if that happens, you'll see us popping up all over the place."

London's annual gay wedding show will be held on May 16 at the Windermere Manor. For more information, visit **gayweddingshow.ca**. For more information on Elite Catering by Design, visit **elitecateringbydesign.ca**. O

Two of the tents at the London, Ontario 2009 show.
Photo courtesy of Stone Photography.

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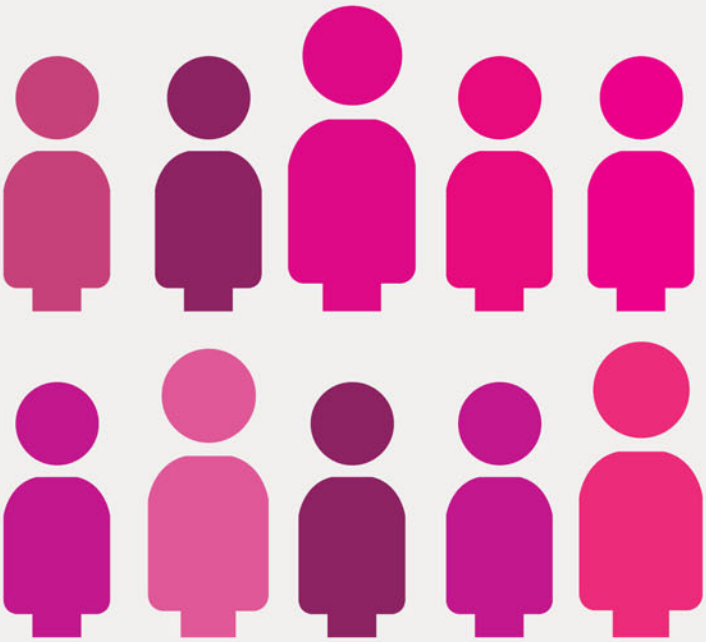

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The Gay Blood Ban

The players: Kyle Freeman vs. CBS (Canadian Blood Services). The stakes: a quarter of a million dollars, and an alleged violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The greater socio-cultural impact: a ripple effect on the gay community's ongoing struggle for "equality" in the eyes of a nation. Court is in session.

If you haven't heard the news already, the bottom line is this: A gay man has been sued for donating blood. Apparently, if you're a sexually active homosexual man, it's against the law. Kyle Freeman, an out gay man, has been donating his blood for years. What some would consider an act of sheer generosity and selflessness, the CBS considers fraudulent.

Now, the backstory: For any of you lucky few out there who have had the opportunity to donate blood (present company not included), you'll know there's a screening process which potential donors go through before the whole lay-back-and-relax procedure. Ever since CBS took over as Canada's blood collection agency more than a decade ago, the MSM (men who have sex with men) policy has been in effect. It is designed to screen out persons who might have STIs, including primarily HIV/AIDS, in order to protect all people who receive blood transfusions from potentially infected blood. According to CBS, "men who have sex with men" are part of a "high-risk" group. In turn, a lifetime ban has been issued on our blood.

Freeman lied during his donor screening process. He sat down in that chair, sleeve rolled up, ready to give, and was asked, quite simply and frankly, "Have you ever had sex with a man, even once, since 1977?". Kyle answered "no." He snuck his *clean and healthy* blood past CBS's dated policies—and through thorough, conclusive blood testing procedures, mind you—out to people in need. Problem is, CBS eventually found out he lied.

Last year, CBS filed a lawsuit against Freeman for negligent misrepresentation (for lying on his screening form). Freeman didn't hesitate before counter-suing, seeking $250,000 in damages. Freeman alleges that the blood collection agency has violated his Charter of Rights by discriminating against him, based on his sexual orientation. Arguments have been heard and the ten-week trial concluded earlier this year; but the court's decisions have yet to be announced. The outcome could significantly alter the notion that all gay men are part of a "high-risk" category for carrying sexually transmitted infections, or, it could continue to

perpetuate longstanding ideals about the gay community and its associated "sexual promiscuity."

Now, some readers might be shocked to hear about this MSM lifetime blood ban. In researching this article, we were surprised to discover how many Canadians, straight, gay or otherwise, were unaware of the regulations enforced by CBS, and the lump-summing of all gay men into one "high-risk" category. For interest's sake, other "risky" donor categories include intravenous drug users, people who have received transplants of animal tissue or organs, people who have had sex in return for money, and people whose jobs have required them to handle monkeys. Yes, gents, we're in a group with monkeys—and, in the eyes of CBS, we always have been. Even worse, as recently as 2007, Health Canada instituted a new policy, which bans all sexually active gay men from donating organs, regardless of their HIV status. I've carried around an organ donor card in my wallet all my adult life; but turns out that it's been rendered useless. Is our blood really that dangerous?

First off, the MSM policy itself isn't entirely without merit. According to research done by the Red Cross, gay men are as much as sixty times more likely than the general population to contract an STI, and account for the largest group of blood donors who are found HIV positive by blood donor testing. The courts who were hearing the Kyle Freeman case were offered testimony that 17 percent of men in Ontario who have had male-to-male sex now have HIV, and 51 percent of the approximately 60,000 Canadians reported with HIV, are MSM. The facts are against us. However, the issue here is the definition of "us," and the grouping of all gay men into one all-encompassing "high-risk" category.

Let's break it down—the MSM policy bans blood donations from all men who have had sex with another man, dating all the way back to 1977. This chronology extends to before the AIDS outbreak, to make for a better-safe-than-sorry policy that includes all the gay sex that's been had in the last 33 years. (Let's just take a moment to imagine it all…wow, no?) This timeline applies to every gay man, even those who were not even born in the 70s (including yours truly). Moreover, it's a broad-based, blanket exclusion that wrongly assumes that all gay men engage in the same risky behaviours. This point was argued by Patricia LeFebour, who acted as Freeman's attorney in his case against CBS. LeFebour claims that the MSM policy assumes that all gay men are "high-risk," whereas, in reality it should be someone's sexual practices, not his sexuality that deems him "high-risk."

Testimony from Freeman's side states that only an estimated 15-20 percent of MSM engage in unprotected anal sex, while the majority practice safer sex and are at "negligible or no risk" of contracting STIs. Sure, 17 percent of MSM in Ontario have HIV; but what about the other 83 percent? If the courts hear these arguments and rule in Freeman's favour, it could paint a new picture of the gay community, and potentially lead to a reform of the CBS policy, allowing healthy gay men to donate blood.

Will the courts rule in his favour, though? Has this been a true violation of Kyle Freeman's Charter of Rights and Freedoms? Representation on the CBS side of the dispute claims that the Charter does not apply to Canadian Blood Services, because it is not a government agency (even though they are funded and regulated by the folks in Ottawa). Furthermore, CBS asserts that donors are not entitled to any equality-based arguments, since donating blood is a privilege, not a right. Lastly, and perhaps the most pertinent, arguments have been made that Freeman was never discriminated against for his sexual orientation. Freeman's blood was deemed unsafe by CBS not because Freeman is gay, but because he's had male-to-male sex. CBS maintains that it's not an issue of lifestyle judgment, but rather an issue of his risky sexual behaviours.

Well, if it's about behaviours, then let's make it about behaviours. If men who have sex with men are more likely to contract incurable infections in their blood based on the behaviours in which they engage, then let's ask about those behaviours. Instead of asking just one tell-all question on the screening form, a serious investigation into a donor's sexual practices (re: condom use, numbers of partners, monogamy, etc.) could judge individual risk.

In 2006, the American Red Cross publicly stated that the MSM lifetime ban (also enforced by the United States blood collection agency, the Food and Drug Administration) is both "scientifically and medically unwarranted." Countries across the world (Argentina, Austria, Australia, Hungary, Italy, Japan, South Africa and Spain to name a few) have adopted alternatives to the blanket ban of gay blood. Instead, they've instituted policies based on the risks of people's individual sexual practices. Some have successfully developed 12-month deferral periods, preventing donors who have had male-to-male sex within the past year (rather than 33) from donating. So far, the statistics have shown no increase to HIV in these countries' blood supplies. The one-year ban is at least a start.

So, why has a progressively liberal country like Canada yet to adopt a new outlook, and alter the lifetime MSM blood ban? Their defense is that it comes down to an issue of risk management. They're tasked with the overwhelming responsibility of handling Canada's blood and blood supply products, and they have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to safety. Fair enough, but the evidence continues to build against them.

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While Kyle Freeman's case has brought this issue to the forefront of our community's discourse, this is by no means the first time the argument's been heard. Debates are being had in Ottawa, Washington and around the globe, albeit without very much progress. Denmark, Finland, France, Germany and the Netherlands are among other western countries that also enforce a lifetime ban on MSM blood. There is a glimmer of hope in the air, however. In early March of this year, John Kerry spearheaded a group of 18 US. senators who requested that the FDA change its policy forbidding gay men from donating blood. If this motion goes forward, paired with a favorable ruling in the Freeman case, crucial change could be set in motion, bringing gay men into blood banks everywhere.

Regardless of the outcome, the weight of Freeman vs. CBS rests on the shoulders of the gay community. To limit blood donations from people who handle monkeys is one thing, but to rigidly implement a lifetime ban on all homosexuals, without consideration of their sexual behaviours, is simply wrong. While it may not be every person's right to donate blood, it should be the right of every healthy person.

The judge has yet to rule in Freeman's case. A decision is expected as early as this summer. Until then, we wait. In the meantime, keep away from man-handling any monkeys. O

~ JASON KRELL

Renovation Nation

OUTLOOKS Magazine recently met Maciek Mika, professional contractor and fellow design enthusiast. We partnered with Maciek and his company, Essential Renovations, on their Ugly Bathroom Renovation Contest last year and there are some ugly bathrooms out there indeed! So, we asked Maciek, renovation expert and hammer-swinging hottie to share his top five ways to spruce up your "loo" without breaking the bank.

Tip 1: Painting

We start with the obvious. Painting is an inexpensive way to freshen up your bathroom. Choosing light colours is usually best, as most bathrooms are small and you don't want to feel like you've crawled into a cave. Painting a bathroom white will give it a clean, fresh feeling but you can also try light blue or sage to give your bathroom a relaxing spa-like feeling.

Tip 2: Fixtures

The sky is the limit in choosing bathroom fixtures—but make sure you pick a style that matches the rest of your house. If you have a modern aesthetic throughout, choose contemporary fixtures with straight lines. This goes for taps, door handles and towel racks. Any hardware store sells a variety of these. Just make sure that, if you need to get beyond the surface and into the plumbing, you call a certified plumber.

Tip 3: Storage

Your bathroom renovation won't mean anything unless you are able to keep it neat and organized. If you have the room, find a cabinet that can store your lotions and potions. If not, look up and see what kind of room there is above your head. With some stylish baskets or boxes and a shelf you can eliminate a lot of clutter.

Tip 4: Lighting

To make sure that you're leaving the house looking your best, a well-lit bathroom is key. Gone are the days of using a single light source in your bathroom. Try a mix of lighting treatments to balance the light and add interest. You might also try using a small chandelier to add some sparkle, and install dimmer switches to add ambience when you want to relax in the tub.

Tip 5: Luxurious Extras

Bathrooms can be a relaxing escape from daily life. If you're lucky enough to have extra bathroom space and budget, add some ***wow*** with some soft seating to relax when you get out of the shower or tub. With limited space you can try adding a flat screen television or wall-mounted fireplace to deck out a room. If those aren't options, splurge on decadent towels. You'll feel like a king (or queen) every morning.

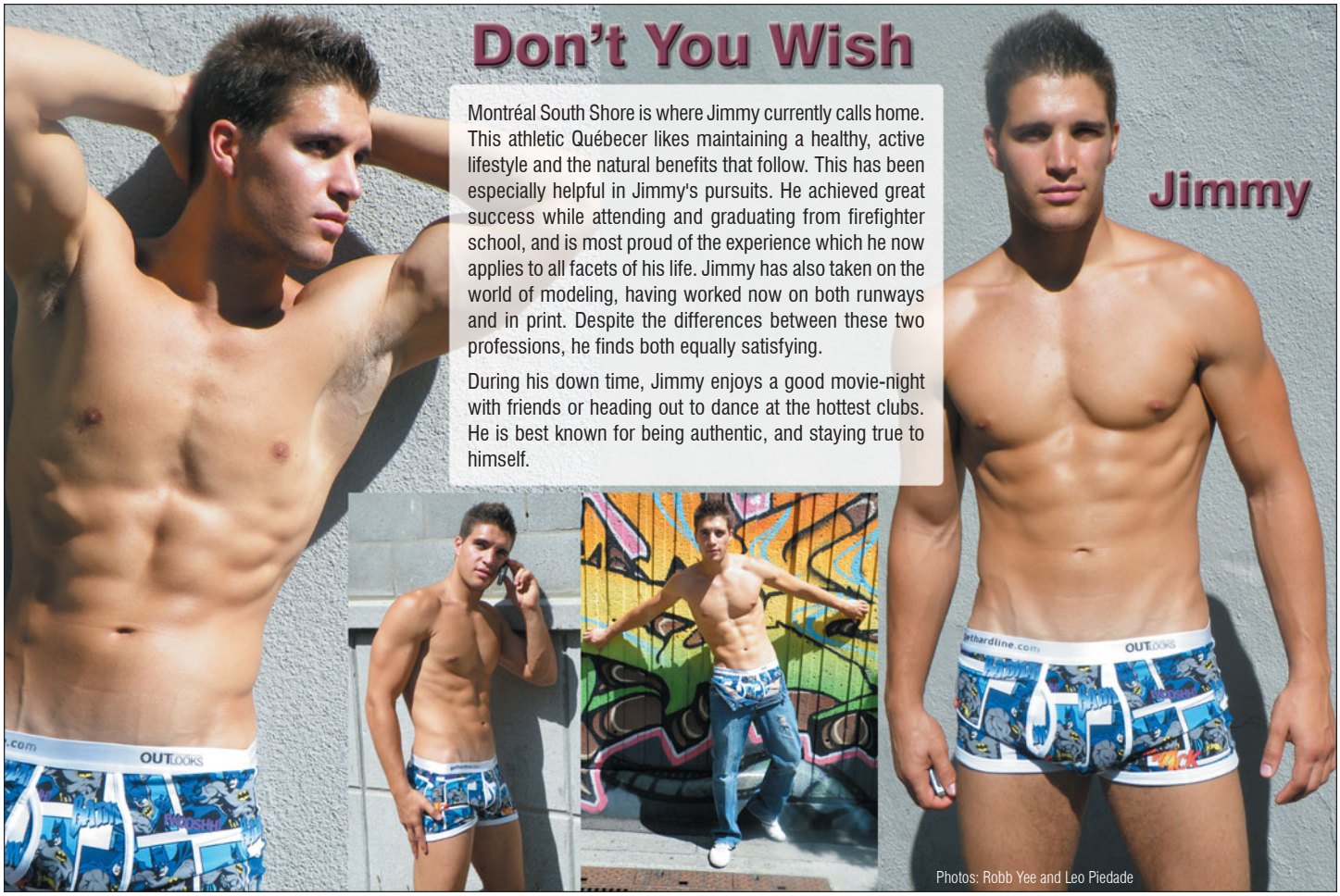
Photos: Jola Mika.

Don't You Wish

Jimmy

Montréal South Shore is where Jimmy currently calls home. This athletic Québecer likes maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle and the natural benefits that follow. This has been especially helpful in Jimmy's pursuits. He achieved great success while attending and graduating from firefighter school, and is most proud of the experience which he now applies to all facets of his life. Jimmy has also taken on the world of modeling, having worked now on both runways and in print. Despite the differences between these two professions, he finds both equally satisfying.

During his down time, Jimmy enjoys a good movie-night with friends or heading out to dance at the hottest clubs. He is best known for being authentic, and staying true to himself.



Photos: Robb Yee and Leo Piedade

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~ DIANE WALSH

A Twist on a Twisted Profession

Here's a twist on what the moral hypocrites of our society regularly label a twisted profession.

Of course, I'm talking about the oldest profession—and this includes every aspect of sex work and prostitution. And I'll say, at the outset, that I've found nothing but straight talk from every sex worker that I've ever interviewed.

Interviews with female sex workers are abundant—from street walkers to 10 grand-an-hour escorts, to Celebrity Madams to German brothels—it's all there in the encyclopedias of sex work.

But there is not much about the services of male workers. I thought there's got to be more to it than Rent Boys and Bath House Hookers.

Certainly the target market for every female hooker must be the panting male—but we all know that men like men as well. More so than perhaps women want or wish to admit or like—jealously, they never want to know.

So, I set about finding me a professional male sex worker to talk to. It wasn't that easy a task. They don't seem to break cover as easily as their female counterparts. But, I found one that would talk to me in multi-syllable words. And, boy, did I learn some surprising facts!

My source was George (not his real name). He was a well-groomed 40-something masseur, practising his body touch business in Victoria, BC.

We met at his studio in an average, well-kept and discreet suburban house in Victoria. The room, dedicated to his business, contained a professional massage table, a double bed and cabinets and shelves with oil—no vinegar—and other tools of the trade. Plenty of linens and towels were visible in the soft lighting. The room had an "away from the outside world" feel to it. If I were to be held captive, this would be my space of choice.

"So, who comes here?" I asked, immediately realizing my unintended pun.

"Almost everybody," was the smiling reply. But turning a little serious, George told me that his regular clients were overwhelmingly men who lived either married lives or presented to the world as clearly preferring to be imagined as heterosexual.

I imagined a trail of unhappy men in mackintoshes skulking behind the hedge, waiting 'til dusk for a quick BJ before going home to the wife. "Not so," said George. BJs weren't on the menu and most visits were in the daytime. Raincoats when it was raining, of course.

He said his client base represented men from all walks of life and professions—builders to bankers. The common thread was an absence of touch and affection in their lives. He said that many felt taken for granted and used by their families or their employers.

George provided some companionship, empathy and conversation as much as he provided a sexual service. He likened it to having a couple of beers with benefits.

I asked why his clients didn't just visit female sex workers as "normal" or "average-hetero" men might. Correctly, he looked at me as being pathetically uninformed. Firstly, there is no "normal" according to George; and secondly, he was sure that most of his clients had experienced the services of female workers. Apparently, many had said that they found the services often rushed, loaded and insincere. George was quick to point out that the female workers that he knew absolutely provided their best for their clients—but every barrel has a few bad apples. There are unsafe and insincere male workers, as well, he added. There was no clock visible in George's studio and he told me that his time with his clients simply flowed until the session ended with a shower at a mutually convenient time.

Itching to know what happens behind the Green Door of George's studio, I decided it was time for some coy-faced shooting. "What services do you actually provide? What do your clients expect? Surely not just a chat and a massage!"

With a patient and pained look, George told me that it was exactly that. Massage and a chat. Certainly, he was happy to say that the massage was more complete and intimate than one might receive from your friendly chiropractor. He reminded me that many of his clients no longer received simple affectionate touch, let alone intimate sexual experiences from their spouses. So there was no zone on the client's body that might not receive George's "laying on of hands"—always consensual of course. And he added that he certainly took no offense to some reciprocal exploring where it pleased the client.

But, and George became earnestly serious, intercourse and/or exchange of bodily fluids is never on the menu in his studio. For George and his clients, their visits are about an oasis of quiet time, touch, erotic fantasy and some outpouring of frustration with day-to-day life.

There are more ways to enjoy sex than simply fucking. George isn't against fucking; but that's not his service. His clients can leave knowing that they've had a sexual and sensual experience in absolute safety. They can return to their lives knowing that they've taken no risks with the health of their loved ones and that they can visit again, knowing that they are accepted entirely for who they are.

What were George's personal preferences? He said he looked forward to a day when we could more readily accept the idea that people are simply people—that we'd do well to drop the labels that we choose to define us—and never do properly define us. A true release is to lose the labels.

To George, his clients are simply people of all shapes, sizes, ages, preferences and orientations. He never asks or assumes. He just enjoys the fact that they're likely to come back for a second stroke. I'd have paid to climb onto George's table after our chat—but it wasn't on the menu.

So, there's the twist—nothing twisted here. Just experiences that we should all enjoy from time to time—this time delivered by a male sex worker instead of a female. Bring on the Revolution! O

Randall on the Road

Canaditude

The maple leaf forever. As if the world didn't already know about Canada's favourite tree-part, Michael Buble's swinging rendition of the classic tune during the Vancouver Olympics Closing Ceremony made sure the rest of the planet knows.

But travellers have been building the Canadian "brand" for decades—before heading off for a summer on Eurail or a season working in Australia, their mothers (presumably) hand-stitched a wee Canadian flag onto their backpacks. While people around the planet assumed the traveller was saying "I am Canadian," I believe many were, in fact, saying "please don't kidnap me, I'm not American!"

After the Vancouver Olympics, I think it's safe to say that Canadians have finally become truly, deeply proud to be *Canadian*. As an immigrant, I've been proud to call Canada my adopted home, if not my native land, for many years. And as a very frequent traveller, I'm always glad to be spotted as Canadian. These days, friends around the world ask me "what" I am, Canadian or American.

In truth, I consider myself both. But while I'll always be a proud Yank, I increasingly introduce myself as Canadian.

I'm writing this column from 37,000 feet, onboard EasyJet, crossing the North Sea between the British Isles and Europe. I spent the past few days in Edinburgh researching this issue's **fashion-focused piece on kilts** (page 34). March in Scotland begs for a toque, and my current toque-of-choice is the red-and-black, diamond-plaid one from our Canadian Olympic athletes' official uniform. My Scottish pal Jennifer—a former roommate and travel companion—commented that I "look quite Canadian."

I felt incredibly proud in that moment. I realized that the updated clichés of Canadiana resonate with the world, that people no longer assume we're all American, and that there are other ways to announce our Canadian-ness than a flag sewn on our backpacks. As Crai Bower, fellow-journalist in the U.S. said, the Vancouver Olympics brought out our *Canaditude*.

Whether you travel within our borders or farther afield, I encourage you to display a bit of Canaditude.

That's my outlook. What's yours?

Blog with me at **www.randallshirley.com/blog**

The author in the UK, showing some post-Olympics Canadian pride.

PRIDE across the border

If you're itching to flirt with Americans, consider visiting a PRIDE event in your nearest border city this season. West to East:

Seattle, WA, June 27, **www.seattlepride.org**
Spokane, WA, June 12, **www.outspokane.com**
Minneapolis, MN, June 26-27, **www.tcpride.com**
Detroit, MI, June 6, **www.motorcitypride.org**
Buffalo, NY, June 5-6, **www.pridecenterwny.org**
Burlington, VT, July 24, **www.pridevt.com**

Air Canada announces "comfort plus"

According to Air Canada, you can sit up front for only a $249 surcharge each way on international flights between Toronto/Montréal and Athens or Barcelona, or between Toronto and Dublin. That's because the carrier doesn't offer Executive First on the planes that normally fly those routes. The seats basically look like old business class seats, but if you're keen for the extra room and your fare is eligible, it might not be a bad deal.

Gay home on the road

Travellers who wish they could take more steamer trunks and hat boxes when they hit the road might consider RV travel, after all, you could devote an entire closet to your own clothes, plus never have to worry about staying with relatives or pesky hotel clerks again. But you won't be alone on the road, according to the industry coalition Go RVing Canada, which claims that RV vacations remain the most cost-effective form of travel for Canadians. The coalition also cites Statistics Canada data showing a huge increase in RV sales during the last quarter of 2009 in Ontario, with RV sales jumping 46% over the previous year. **www.gorving.ca**.

~ RANDALL SHIRLEY

Islands of Intimacy

***Travel Editor Randall Shirley** makes a discovery off the coast of Québec that may be Canada's best-kept secret—a place that may never let you go home.*

The islands' unique shoreline and beaches beg to be explored..
Photo: Randall Shirley

This is exactly the kind of moment where people die in the movies, I think to myself as waves of the mighty Atlantic pound my body against rocky cliffs, engaged in a new soft-adventure sport called "coasteering." I barely catch my breath and grab in vain for a nearby rock before a giant wave rolls me over again, pushing my body up against a wall of sandstone.

A few feet away, my friend Ghislain, a gay local and proudly Acadian, lets out a whoop of glee as the waves slosh his body against the rocks. I barely hear him as another wave completely pounds over my head—protected inside a climber's helmet.

"Are you doing OK, Randall?" Jean-Francois' voice startles me as he swims up behind me, seemingly unfazed as the surf spins us both over the top of each other. Of course he's unbothered: the ridiculously fit 20-something swims in these waves every day, guiding travellers like me—dressed in wetsuits, booties, and helmets—along one of the planet's truly unique eco-adventures: swimming and playing serious ocean waves as they roar into the rust-red sandstone cliffs of the northernmost island, and getting intensely personal with the cliffs, caves, and rock formations that the waves create.

There's nothing patently gay about the experience, unless, like me, you're the kind of gay traveller who wants to prove that we haven't tried everything...yet.

On *Les Iles de la Madeleine*, known in English as the "Magdalene Islands," swimming among cliffs and rocks that could easily wreck an errant ship is just one adventure that makes my visit here feel intensely intimate. After four days on this archipelago, smack in the middle of Québec's Gulf of St. Lawrence, I've found an island paradise where both the land and the Acadian people seem to invite intimate experiences. Perhaps they think I'll fall in love and stay forever. It has happened to others.

These wind-swept and sun-kissed islands have successfully seduced more than a few gay lovers, enticing them to stay. My friends Ghislain Boudreau and Guy Martineau, a couple for over 20 years, are two of them. They're living a classic gay dream: owning a B&B. Theirs, called La Butte Ronde, occupies a historic building that previously served locals—*Madeleinot*, as the Islanders call themselves—as both a school-house and a seniors' dance hall. When they rescued the building, it didn't have a single window intact. But Guy's carpentry skills and Ghislain's willing hands rebuilt it into a remarkable refuge for travellers, gay and straight.

During one of Guy's gourmet breakfasts (buckwheat pancakes with homemade blueberry sauce) I gaze out the window across the island's rolling hills. Wood-sided houses dot the landscape, brightly painted

The islands are dotted with colourful houses and magical wildflowers.
Photo: Randall Shirley

in more colours than any gay rainbow. Laundry hangs from lines in the yards, making me think perhaps life is simpler, slower here. **The houses look like rainbow confetti tossed from heaven onto the vibrant green landscape.** Guy laughs at my observation, explaining that island legend says that when God finished creating the world, he had a handful of sand left, so he scattered it in this spot creating the archipelago of four major islands, connected with many sandbars. God did something right—the grassy beaches are among the most beautiful on the entire Atlantic coast, and their remoteness helps keep them sparsely developed.

In truth, the islands—covered in grass, evergreens, a zillion wild daisies and ubiquitous lupins—are remarkable geologic formations, sitting atop salt domes. This and more I learn at the Sea Museum. Undersea salt mining is a major industry here, but it plays a minor role compared to the traditional industry of fishing. Like other Atlantic maritime regions, cod has largely been depleted, but lobster and scallops abound, and seafood is a dominant theme at the many outstanding restaurants around the islands.

A classic dish of seafood pie is known as *pot-en-pot*, and I'm lucky enough to sample Guy's own recipe. It's loaded with so much lobster I can hardly believe it. In fact, during lobster season (summer, when most people visit), the shellfish can be dirt cheap. Unfortunately, Guy's *pot-en-pot* is not available to B&B guests (you may be able to beg for it), but he'll recommend a couple of restaurants where you can try the dish.

On the far south end of the islands I meet another gay couple who were seduced from the mainland. Laurent Lacoquelle and William Lovell visited the islands as vacationers nine years ago, and returned to open a B&B. Laurent had taken a few baking courses in Montréal, and word of his breads and baked goods spread around the islands. Today, food is the couple's primary business at their *La Fleur de Sable* Bakery. Laurent's baguettes are the perfect combination of crusty and chewy. Use of local ingredients is key to their bakery's magic, including a signature foccacia made with magnificent locally smoked herring, or a unique beer bread, blended with suds from the surprisingly good local brew (the brewery is well worth a visit, even if just to ogle the adorable staff). Laurent's chocolate croissants get raves, too.

Nearby, the heritage village of La Grave beckons with gay-friendly galleries. The *Artisans du Sable* gallery is especially interesting, selling unique works made of one ingredient the island has plenty of: sand—everything from chess sets to candle holders to statuary.

I've come to La Grave for more than great baked goods and galleries. I've come to indulge a great gay travel habit: an evening of live theatre. *Mes Iles Mon Pays* is locally created and produced, the brainchild of Yolande Painchaud, to help create jobs and focus for unemployed people in the region. She's done a shockingly good job of training local folk into decent actors, and for two hours they bring the history of their islands to life. It's not high art, but like everything on the islands, there is a sincerity to the production that makes stories of Mi'kmaq natives, the arrival of Champlain, the displacing and return of the Acadian people, and even the modern seal hunt, completely engrossing. Surprisingly, the community hall has a state-of-the-art headphone system which presents the whole thing in English.

Like a great love affair, my tryst with *Les Iles de la Madeleine* was intensely rich—a lover that isn't easily shaken from the mind. Luckily for me, and for you, boats and planes travel to these islands every day, and the islands have a lot of love to give. But as we've learned, some gay travellers fall so intimately in love with the islands they never come back. Will you be one of them? O

Arriving by ship from Montréal creates magic before you ever set foot on the islands. Photo: Randall Shirley.

The maritime environment is relaxing and colourful.
Photo: Randall Shirley.

Sea kayaking, beaches, and the new sport of "coasteering" are some of the many ways to enjoy being in the islands.
Photo: Randall Shirley.

Guy Martineau & Ghislain Boudreau operate a B&B in the islands. Photo: Randall Shirley.

The staff at Microbrasserie À l'abri de la Tempête will serve you a kick-ass brew in a unique setting. Photo: Randall Shirley.

William Lovell & Laurent Lacoquelle are renowned region-wide for their bakery's delights. Photo: Randall Shirley.

Laurent Lacoquelle's baguettes are the perfect thing for a sandwich lunch. Photo: Randall Shirley.

Island artists, like the Arture, creator of these astonishing mannequins at gallery/cafe Le Flaneur, make for some very delightful encounters. Photo: Randall Shirley.

The Details

Get there:

- Air Canada offers nonstop service from Montréal, flying time approx. two hours. Daily ferry service (five hours) on CTMA Ferries from Prince Edward Island allows eastern travellers to take their car (a car is required to really explore the islands). A comfortable cruise, also by CTMA, makes the journey from Montréal, requiring two nights on board, **www.ctma.ca**

Stay:

- The islands have many B&B's and some small inns, two gay-owned choices include:
  - La Butte Ronde Couette & Café (B&B), **www.labutteronde.com**
  - La Fleur de Sable (B&B), **www.lafleurdesable.com**

Eat / Drink:

- There are many choices and excellent food, including an abundance of lobster. A few faves include:
  - La Fleur de Sable Bakery & Café (left)
  - Restaurant Café de la Grave, (418) 937-5765
  - Microbrasserie À l'abri de la Tempête (outstanding brewery), **www.alabridelatempete.com**
  - Fromagerie du Pied-de-Vent (artisanal cheese) (418) 969-9292
  - Le Fumoir d'Antan (smoked herring) **www.fumoirdantan.com**

Play:

- The islands have plenty of activities, including amazing beaches and walking possibilities. See **www.tourismeilesdelamadeleine.com**
  - Sea kayaking, **www.parcdegroscap.ca**
  - Rock/cave swimming, La Salicorne Auberge & Escapades, **www.salicorne.ca**
  - Theatre, **www.mesilesmonpays.com**
  - Artisans du Sable Sand Art Gallery, **www.artisansdusable.com**
  - Le Flaneur Gallery & Café, **www.leflaneur.com**

EDINBURGH:

Slightly Off Kilter

~ RANDALL SHIRLEY

Ready to show a little leg for spring? ***Travel Editor Randall Shirley*** *takes you to the core of Scottish tradition to find a city brimming with men in skirts.*

Third generation kiltmaker Howie Nicholsby has updated the concept of the kilt with 21st Century Kilts—a large gay clientele has helped him do it! Photo: Randall Shirley.

What are you wearing under there?

It seems to be the required question of any man in a kilt—god knows why we can't resist asking the question.

So in Edinburgh, Scotland, when I meet Howie Nicholsby, owner of 21st Century Kilts, who has taken it upon himself to update the concept of the kilt, I simply have to ask. Being a polite Canadian, I skirt the direct question by asking, "how often does someone ask you what's under your kilt?"

"Not every day," the 31-year-old, third generation kilt-maker responds, "but it can be a bit ridiculous. I wear underwear and I'm quite honest about it; it's part of the whole evolving [the kilt] as a modern-day garment. You shouldn't have to go commando every day. You shouldn't really even get asked; shouldn't get people putting their hands up there."

I've arrived in Edinburgh, the capital city of Scotland, on a big rugby match weekend: Scotland is playing England, and the city of 500,000 is buzzing. It's a sunny Saturday afternoon, and pedestrians hurry past the Sir Walter Scott monument, the imposing castle atop the crag, and the Victorian masterpiece Balmoral Hotel—elements that contribute to Edinburgh's status as a UNESCO World Heritage City—headed for pubs to watch the match.

This includes lots of men in kilts—of all ages and types. Some wear the official purple and blue tartan of the hometown rugby team, topped with a rugby jersey. Some wear other traditional tartan weaves. Up top, some wear rugby jerseys; others jackets or sweaters.

Friendly Howie invites me across Thistle Street to the pub opposite his 21st Century Kilts, the stand-alone shop he opened in 2009 after operating from a corner of his father's legendary Geoffrey (Tailor) Shop for a decade. We're on the shaded back patio so he can smoke, and I'm sure I spot goosebumps on his calves between the tops of his chunky socks and the hem of his plaid kilt.

Chunky socks, he says, are the only kind of socks are appropriate with a kilt-but sandals are ok, too. "I sort of see myself as a catalyst in the future of the kilt, that it can become a more everyday piece of clothing for any man, anywhere. I think we're a long time off Gap ever offering it, but not that far off."

In Canada and other countries, guys might get ribbed for wearing kilts as commonly as men do in Scotland. Howie hopes to help change that; much as gay-popular Utilikilts have done. Howie says he admires the Utilikilt people for what they've created, but notes that Utilikilts are much further away from traditional kilts than he wants to go. He says both types of kilt have their place, "a man should still have his traditional tartan kilt, and have a Utilikilt for gardening and barbecuing, stuff like that."

Starting around $450, Howie's kilts are certainly not meant for being splattered with barbecue grease. They are more for the office, an evening out, and of course for weddings.

Howie's rethinking of the kilt is plenty radical, while holding to core concepts, such as pleating (which is what "kilt" means)." He's dropped the waistline, moved them hem to decidedly below the knee, and sometimes emphasizes secondary colours in tartans by making them primary colours for jacket lining. He's creates optional pockets that button on, sized for mobile phones and wallets, and basically made the whole thing a lot more casual. In addition to traditional tartans, Howie offers unusual fabrics-including leather, denim, and even pinstripe suiting.

The UK's current solution to gay marriage—Civil Partnership—has been a big boon for kilt-makers. After all, Howie explains, suddenly you have *two grooms*—double the business. Across town at a traditional kilt shop the sales clerk agrees. And Howie's seen business from lesbians as well.

Normally he doesn't create men's jackets to fit women, but he recently made an exception for a lesbian couple. It has "nothing to do with sexuality, but I don't really do women's jackets. But because [this customer] was kind of masculine and it was a gay wedding I was probably more likely to do it for her...and she wanted a masculine look."

Howie first started targeting the gay market nearly a decade ago at a London G&L lifestyle show, but not because he thinks gay men are any more likely to wear skirts. "It's got nothing to do with sexuality whether you wear a kilt well or not… All [types of] men wear kilts. It's whether or not you have the balls for it." The kilt is for "people who have a love for the garment, and understand that you don't have to have anything to do with Scotland to wear it. It's like jeans were originally invented in France, and you don't have to be French to wear denim jeans.

My visit with Howie is fun and educational, and I feel I'm in the presence of someone who really understands his place in fashion. A visit with him, plus the kilts and legs I see all around Edinburgh—including many in the city's gay bars—add a dose of interest to this already-magnificent, historic, gay-friendly European capital. Never mind that I spent the day commando under my jeans. **O**

Top: Edinburgh includes famous landmarks—and kilt wearers.

Centre: Traditional "off the peg" kilts are available cheaply in Edinburgh-but remember, you get what you pay for, and they're likely made in China.

Bottom: Kilt wearers can be seen around Edinburgh-especially if there's a rugby match on.

Photos: Randall Shirley.

To learn about tartan, Edinburgh's Tartan Weaving Mill, next to the castle, is the place to go. They can weave any known tartan, if you're willing to pay for it! Photo: Randall Shirley.

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- Café Nom de Plume, healthy choices and vegetarian above the city's GLBT community centre, 60 Broughton St., tel. 0131 478 1372

Play:

- 21st Century Kilts, mail order avail, 48 Thistle St., tel. 0131 220 9450, **www.21stcenturykilts.com**
- Geoffrey (Tailor) Kiltmaker, fine traditional kilts, 57-61 High Street Royal Mile, tel. 0131 557 0256, **www.geoffreykilts.co.uk**
- John Morrison Kiltmakers, 63 High Street, tel 0131 556 0666, **www.kilt.co.uk**
- Edinburgh Cultural Festivals (12 major fests!) **www.edinburghfestivals.co.uk**
- 4 gay bars are clustered around Picardy Place/Leith Walk, The Street, Ego, C.C. Blooms, and Planet Out.
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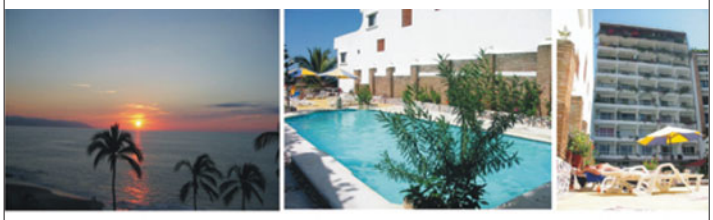

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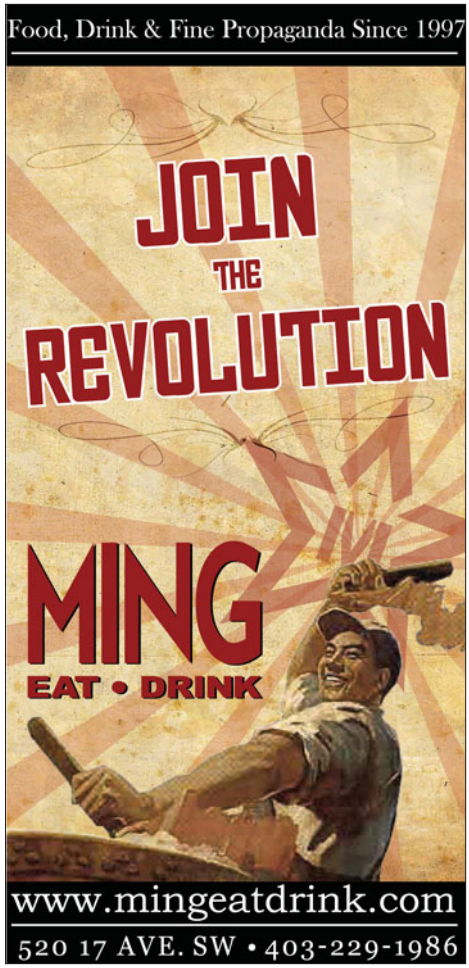
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First Look

Photo: courtesy DSQUARED²

Fun Times Ahead

As every guy knows, girls aren't the only ones who want to have fun. And this just seems like the perfect season to prove it. First, the outdoorsman comes out of the woods, thanks to those twin brothers Dan and Dean Caten of DSQUARED², who have an expert eye at creating sexy clothing for men and women with a touch of Canadian chic. Summer camp T-shirts, cargo shorts and plaid shirts—who knew that ordinary casual basics could look so sophisticated and seductive?

Sure, with the use of suggestive styling and 12 pack ab models, their clothing looks desirable—but that's just what entices most of us to want a piece of the DSQUARED² fantasy.

And speaking of fantasies, that proverbial guy next door amps up his look this spring with bold patterns and creative mixing. Check out our featured shoot *Stampe di charme*, or Prints Charming for us non-Italian speakers. No label does prints quite like Etro. We suited up Taylor Maxey in some daring threads, mixing this season's key graphics: stripes, plaids, florals and checks. This should be practised with a careful eye and always grounded with a solid colour, or else you may end up looking more like a fashion accident than a frontrunner. A special thank you to Harry Rosen for taking the lead in our pattern play.

Brighter days of spring abound—and whether you plan to pitch a tent and get back to nature, or look slick in the concrete jungle—remember to dress the part and enjoy the sun.

Stampe di charme

Classic Italian style in fresh prints

Photographed by Greg Gerla
Styled by Lincoln Phillip & Inna Matyushina
Fashion Direction by Len Mastaler

Plaid jacket, paisley shirt, and stripe tie all by **Etro**
Pocket square by **Allea**
Hat by **Goorin Bros.**

Windowpane suit, shirt and pocket square by **Etro**
Scarf by **Hugo Boss**
Black hat by **Goorin Bros.**

Windowpane suit, shirt and pocket square by **Etro**
Scarf by **Hugo Boss**
Black hat by **Goorin Bros.**

Jacket, t-shirt, jeans and trainers all by **D&G**

Model Taylor: I Model Management
Hair and Makeup Alli: I Model Artists
All clothing courtesy of Harry Rosen: harryrosen.com

Born in Canada, Living in London, Made in Italy

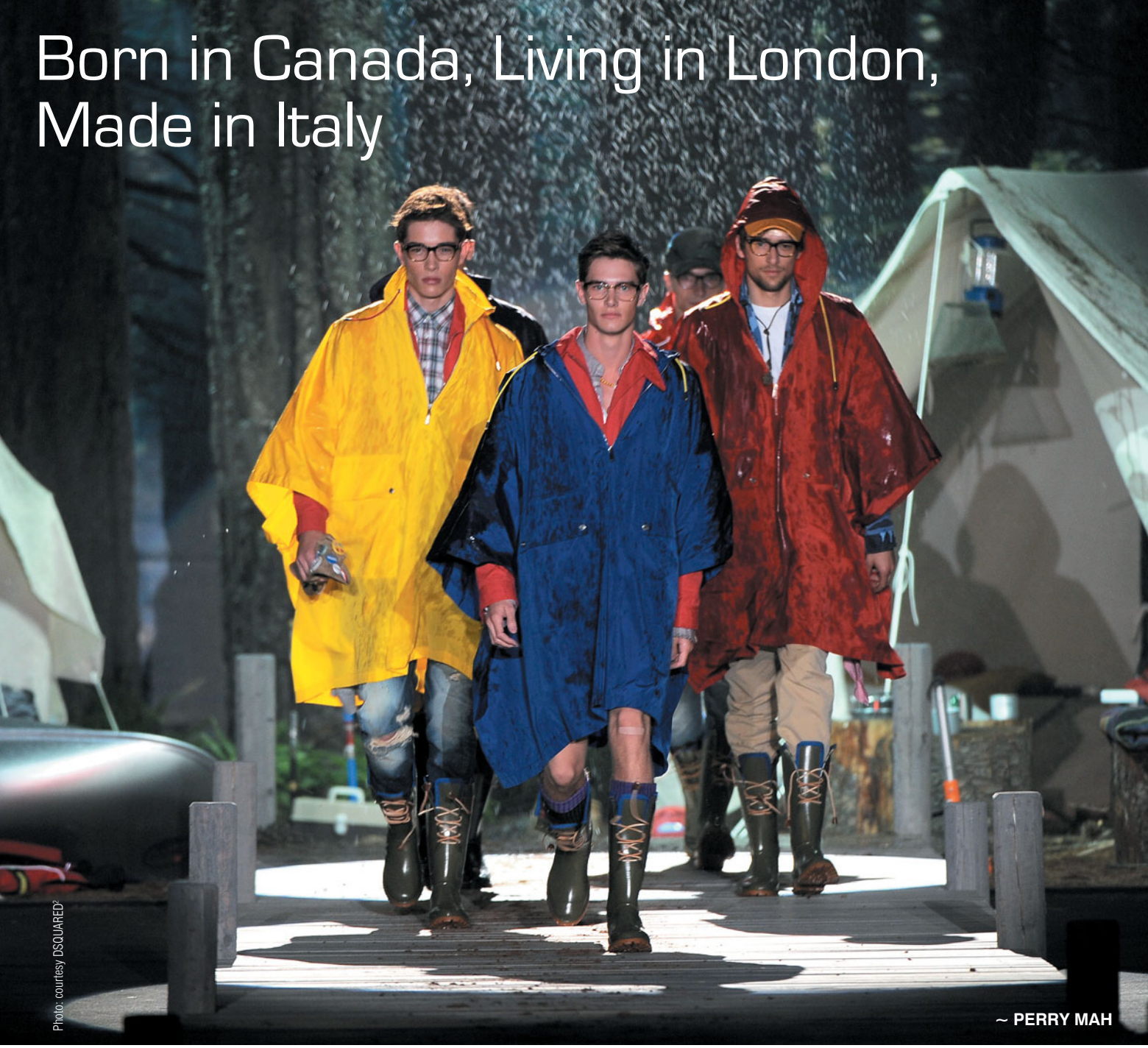


Photo: courtesy DSQUARED²

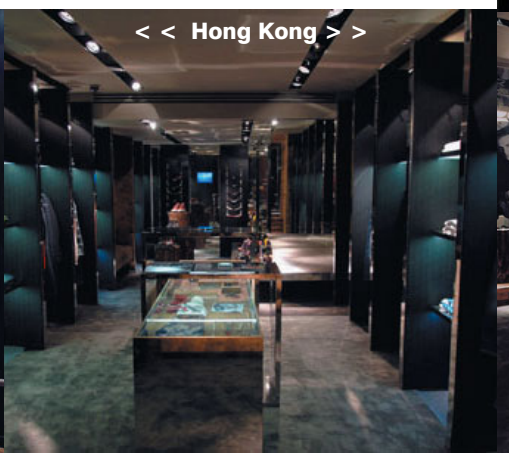
~ PERRY MAH

The intelligent mix of irreverent Canadian wit and refined Italian tailoring, together with attention to detail, are the cornerstone of today's DSQUARED² philosophy, giving life to a unique concept of alternative luxury. Founders, Dean and Dan Caten, are nothing short of an international phenomenon, drawing inspiration from their cosmopolitan lifestyle in Milan and London, and creation of their clothing lines in Italy. Through this, DSQUARED² collections have conquered a wider audience and, owing to their natural stylistic maturity, have become more chic and sophisticated, while maintaining those sexy and provocative traits so embedded in their creative roots.

The Canadian-born twin brothers from Willowdale Ontario have operated in the international fashion business since 1984. They moved to New York City in 1983 to attend the Parson's School of Design, and in 1991, headed to Italy armed with their ideas and fashion sense. In 1994, after many collaborations with the most important fashion houses, they premiered their men's collection show in Milan. This marked the first in a long succession of runway extravaganzas that were to capture the attention of journalists and buyers for their perfect combination of fashion, music and theater. Since catapulting to the level of fashion superstars, the twins have designed both men's and women's collections, developed accessories like eye wear, footwear and jewellery, and even launched a fragrance line for men and women respectively called "He Wood" and "She Wood".

The luxury of their designs further expanded into retail, as shopping at a DSQUARED^2 location became an experience in itself. In 2007, DSQUARED^2 had the inauguration of its 5400 sq. ft flagship store, which opened its doors in the heart of Milan's fashion district. The boutique evokes the 360-degree DSQUARED^2 lifestyle as envisioned by Dean and Dan, calling it "A taste of home, where the Canadian woods meet Italian design". However, opulence comes with a price, and unless you are an international traveler, shopping in person for that new spring outfit might be difficult. The closest DSQUARED^2 mono-brand boutiques are in Capri, Istanbul, Kiev, Hong Kong, Dubai, Singapore and Kowloon.

Milan Flagship Store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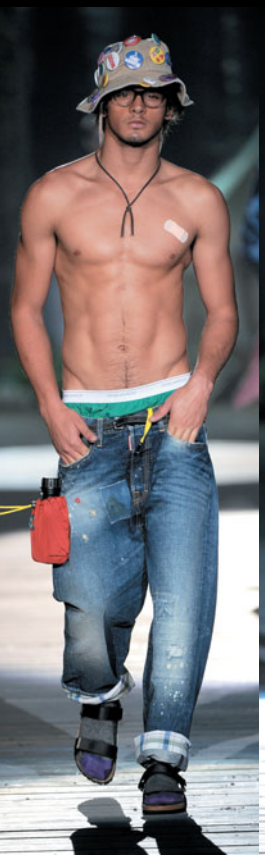


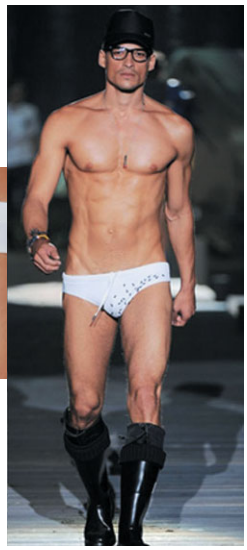
Aligning with Star Power has been a smart move, and a natural progression for Dean and Dan, especially with regards to the music industry. Madonna, Beyonce, Jennifer Lopez, Lenny Kravitz, Justin Timberlake, Usher, and David Beckham are all devotees of the brand. Designing costumes for one of Madonna's tours led to the creation of a full Women's Collection, and further work with strong female music artists Christina Aguilera, Rihanna, Fergie, and Britney Spears.

The fashion industry embraced the Caten twins, recognizing their genius. DSQUARED^2 received the La Kore award, considered the "Oscar" of the Italian fashion world, as the Most Original Designers. Dean and Dan were named "Men of the Year" by GQ Magazine USA as the Best Breakthrough Design Team. A favorite of GQ Magazine and it's various international editions, DSQUARED^2 received numerous awards and praise for their ability to create casual looks while maintaining elegance.

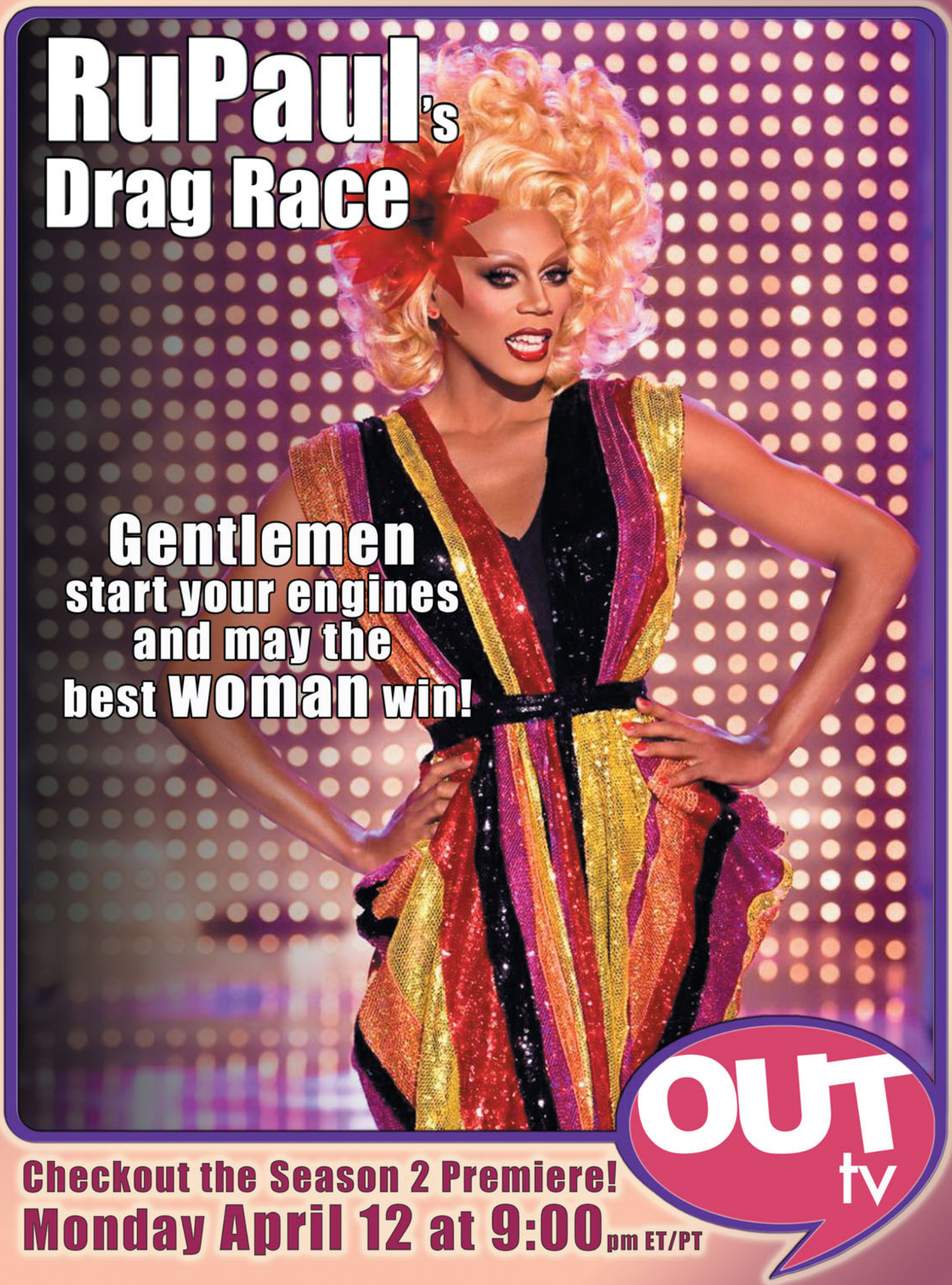
Canada has also applauded their talent, awarding them with a star on Canada's Walk of Fame in 2009, and in their recent involvement with the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic Games. Dean and Dan had the honour of running with the Olympic torch, and were chosen to design the costumes for the headlining talent of the Opening and Closing Ceremonies, including Nelly Furtado and Bryan Adams. To show further support for the Games and pride for their Canadian roots, the twins designed a limited-edition fleece hoodie, available exclusively at Holt Renfrew for $350. "Keep it warm. Keep it real. Keep it Canada," says Dean and Dan. "And don't ever let them see you sweat...in a sweatshirt!"

With their Spring/Summer 2010 collection, unveiled recently in Milan, the creative directors looked to get in touch with nature. Dubbed the "Summer Camp Collection," it opened and closed with buff boys gathered around a campfire, surrounded by imposing faux redwoods. In between, it was a stylish day hike through the traditions of summer: bold colors paired with khakis, browns and other earth tones. There were nods to scouting uniforms, plaids, sun-bleached T-shirts, cargo shorts, weatherproof rain ponchos—all done in a way that only DSQUARED^2 could do it.

The perfect over-the-top touch? A pair of white, barely there swim trunks with a parade of metallic ants marching in formation across the crotch. Try not to stare at THAT. If nothing else, the brother's Spring/Summer collection definitely deserves the fashion merit badge for fun, and continues the strength of their non-traditional luxury style. O



Photos: courtesy DSQUARED^2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Swap Your Way to a New You
(Take Off Your Clothes)

Aleece Germano wants you to take off your clothes. The co-founder of Montréal's The S.W.A.P. Team—a non-profit social enterprise that organizes large-scale clothing swaps in cities across North America—is trying to change our approach to the things we wear. "Swapping is the new shopping," quips the stylish Germano, explaining that the number one reason people buy new clothes is because they're bored with their old ones. The fashion industry encourages such behaviour. With styles and trends changing every season, fashion is all about driving consumer spending through planned obsolescence. But it doesn't have to be this way. Rather than buying a new look, thus perpetuating the cycle of rampant consumerism and unsustainable overproduction, Germano wants people to consider trading in their used clothes for others second hand apparel, thus keeping unwanted items out of landfills, while also keeping consumers out of stores. Swapping, like any form of alternative commerce that requires one to step away from the mainstream retail experience, involves a leap of faith and enough self-confidence to embrace style over fashion.

Quentin Crisp famously declared, "Fashion is what you adopt when you don't know who you are." The writer and raconteur, best remembered for his memoir *The Naked Civil Servant*, and as the inspiration for Sting's hit single *Englishman in New York*, was as famous for his wit as for his trademark androgynous appearance. Characters like Crisp are becoming increasingly rare in this age when young queers can walk into a mall and purchase pre-assembled identities at places like *Abercrombie & Fitch*. Creating a character is at the heart of the step away from fashion and into style, according to stylist and jewellery designer Rachel Dhawan. To achieve a look that's all your own, Rachel suggests starting with "who you really want to be" and establishing your appearance based on the persona you want to project.

Like Germano, Dhawan, who volunteers as a stylist during The S.W.A.P. Team events in Montréal, is all about alternative sources of clothing. But she admits that it's tougher for men than for women to source unique apparel, especially when it comes to the work of local designers, who work in parallel with, but outside, the constraints of mainstream fashion industry and offer unique interpretations of current trends. In her mind, the easiest way for a man to create a personal style is to combine vintage pieces with a few high quality new items, specifically shoes and pants.

When it comes to buying new, "less is more," according to Dhawan. "Why buy a bunch of ill-fitting pieces, when all you need is one outstanding item?" She cautions that well-made garments may cost more to begin with, but that you end up saving money in the long run. "A good pair of shoes can cost three hundred dollars or more, but will last five to ten years." Dhawan favours ankle boots as always fashionable and versatile footwear. She thinks they look great on men and recommends *Blundstones* and *Fleuvogs* for their quality and comfort. The former are styled and manufactured in Australia, while the latter are designed by

Vancouver's John Fleuvog and made in Europe. Neither brand relies on sweatshop labour or cut-rate materials to lower the cost of its products. And, while the end result may be more expensive, a good pair of shoes is a relatively affordable luxury that not only helps anchor your look but also provides a foundation that gets you through the day, especially if you work on your feet.

When it comes to pants, Dhawan recommends Canadian-made denim, and singles out classic cuts by Montréal label *Guido and Mary* as an upscale alternative to department and chain store brands. Once again, she warns about sticker shock, but points to superior fit, durability, and materials.

If jeans aren't your thing, she recommends gray trousers instead of the ubiquitous black. "Gray has a reputation for being boring, but there are so many incredible shades available, and gray pants complement just about everything." However, she warns against wearing vintage trousers, because they're so time-specific that they look out of style unless retailored.

For everything other than trousers and shoes, vintage is the way to go. Dhawan cites incredible bargains and the far better quality of older garments as two of the biggest benefits of second hand clothes. She urges shoppers to pay attention to more than fit and colour. The texture of the fabric, and details like stitching piping, pockets, buttons and fasteners, all of which add to the allure of a vintage piece, contribute to the creation a one-of-a kind look.

As a final tip in completing your look, and in keeping with her quality-over-quantity mantra, Dhawan recommends having one standout accessory. The jewellery designer feels that too many people wear too many cheap accessories. She suggests finding one signature piece—a watch, a pin, or a pair of glasses, to give but a few examples—and making it your own.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, the one thing you should never wear is a graphic tee. "Guys who exchange one graphic for another and think they've got a whole new look are just plain lazy," says Dhawan. But she's not ready to entirely bar the tee shirt from the male wardrobe. She urges us to look beyond black and white and to use the ubiquitous garment to add colour to our wardrobes.

Where does swapping fit into all this? And how does it work? "When you donate your clothes to charity and buy new ones at the mall, you're buying back into the system and contributing to waste. Too many clothes are being mass-produced and simply thrown away. Discarded garments make up four percent of landfill in the United States," says Germano. When you bring your castoffs to one of The S.W.A.P. Team's *Take Off Your Clothes* events, you receive one ticket for every usable garment or every two accessories you contribute. You are then free to scour the racks for replacements. You could get lucky, like the young immigrant who attended the first Toronto event and scored a *Hugo Boss* suit to wear to job interviews. You might find a one-of-a-kind piece donated by a local designer or you could walk away empty handed, in which case, you could offer your tickets to somebody else in the hopes they will find something they can use.

Items that aren't traded by the end of a meet are donated to the Salvation Army in Canada, or a local charity like Boston's AIDS

Action Committee. According to Germano, The S.W.A.P. Team has exchanged 12,172 items since 2007, with more than half of that donated to the Salvation Army. And because the organization's events cater to the style-conscious rather than to trend-obsessed fashionistas, they attract a diverse range of participants, including gender-queers and cross-dressers.

So how are you going to refresh your look this spring? Are you going to hit the malls as usual? Will you try to shop Canadian? Do you have the patience to sift through the racks at thrift stores? Are you brave enough to try swapping? Whatever you decide to do, remember that style is about who you are and what you want to be and not about the clothes you see in boutiques and magazines. Rachel Dhawan may have put it best when she said, "We used to remix our wardrobes ourselves, but now we let the fashion industry do it for us."

Isn't it time you remixed your own look and shuffled your fashion playlist? O

Image sanctioned by The S.W.A.T Team.
Photo: Conception Levy.

Image sanctioned by The S.W.A.T Team.
Photo: Conception Levy.

Upcoming Take Off Your Clothes / Déshabille Toi events:

Ottawa, Ontario
May 2, 2010, 7 p.m. - midnight
Mercury Lounge, 56 Byward Market Square
www.mercurylounge.com

Calgary, Alberta
May 15, 2010, 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Belgo Brasserie, 501 8th Ave. SW
www.belgo.ca

Montréal, Québec
May 29, 2 p.m. - 8 p.m.
Just For Laughs Museum (The Loft)
2111 St. Laurent Blvd

Admission to Take Off Your Clothes varies by city between $5 and $10 and is open to the public.

For more information about The S.W.A.P. Team, visit: **theswapteam.org**

Rachel Dhawan's creations and blog can be found at: **racheldhawan.com**

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NO COVER BEFORE 10PM

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Fly

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Neighbourhood Restaurant & Bar

*VIP BY INVITATION ONLY

~ DOUG ROSS

BARENAKED and on Stage!

Photo: © James Michin

I've got some great news to share with you! Canada's much beloved, highly acclaimed, multi-platinum selling, pop-rock superstars, Barenaked Ladies, have just released their eleventh studio album, "*All in Good Time*."

This musically diverse CD featuring fourteen amazing songs—including lead single, "You Run Away," a plaintive lament of loss and disappointment—has been described as "stylistically adventurous—the most riveting and honest work by the band to date."

Understandably proud of their endeavour, BNL can't wait to perform these electrifying new tracks for you in person, so they're hitting the road from Victoria to Halifax! Which is cool since every BNL live concert is a unique event. Always entertaining and light-hearted, their idiosyncratic stage performances embrace classic hits, overlooked gems, wry comedic banter, improvisational songs and unforgettable harmonies. And even more great news: with every online ticket purchase, a digital download of "*All in Good Time*" is also available. So, what are you waiting for?

But that's not all! Clearly the band's members—Ed Robertson (vocals/guitar), Jim Creeggan (vocals/bass), Kevin Hearn (vocals/keyboard/guitar/accordion), and Tyler Stewart (vocals/drums)—like being busy beavers, because following on the heels of their Canadian performance dates, they'll tour across the US, appearing in approximately two dozen lucky cities.

However, despite ongoing preparations for this hectic schedule, I was fortunately able to chat with Tyler Stewart who was affable, funny and proudly Canadian. He mentioned the positive, progressive outlook the band has maintained since its inception regarding the supporting and hiring of minorities and gays. And his voice fairly boomed with excitement when he told me, "I was so proud to have hosted my sister's wedding in my backyard when she married another woman." But more on that interview later.

First, let me tell you that Toronto filmmaker, Michael McGowan who is a huge BNL fan, approached the band to write a song for the soundtrack of his latest film, "*Score: A Hockey Musical*" and they happily did so. That recently shot film not only combines our national sport with musical numbers, it also stars gay-fave, Olivia Newton John. Pretty cool, huh? And even though BNL are no strangers to having had songs appear on other soundtracks such as "*Friends*," "*EdTV*," "*King of the Hill*" and "*The Big Bang Theory*," it hasn't always been smooth sailing. In fact, their 1991 demo material, "*Yellow Tape*" was rejected by every major label it was submitted to. Oops! However, the undaunted band members simply started selling the cassette themselves and subsequently—after some flattering fan support, some local notoriety about a canceled City Hall gig and some minimal retail exposure—that offbeat little

tape became the first independent release by a band to merit platinum status in Canada, thus paving the way for their first official album, "*Gordon*", to become a national success when released a year later. Other great music soon followed, until finally in 1998 their album titled, "*Stunt*," solidified their hard-won success by claiming the number one spot on Billboard's Hot 100 list! And, justifiably, the international accolades began pouring in. Among their haul of hardware, BNL have won numerous Juno Awards, MuchMusic Video Awards and a World Music Award. As well, the group has also received multiple Grammy nominations.

By stretching their quirky, artistic sensibilities even further, an album titled, "*Barenaked for the Holidays*" evolved, which is an irreverent collection of classic carols like "Jingle Bells" and "O Holy Night" alongside such tongue-in-cheek ditties as "*Elf's Lament*" and "*I Have a Little Dreidel*." Another successful album, "*Snacktime!*" soon followed, consisting of twenty-four original songs for children, which is appropriate, given that all four band members are fathers. And on a similarly adventurous note, while good naturedly spoofing their zany hit song, BNL in conjunction with Ben & Jerry's ice cream makers, enjoyed having "*If I had 1,000,000 Flavours*" get scooped into cones. FYI: BNL donated its entire share of the proceeds from the sales of that delicious flavour to the "ABC Life Literacy Canada Foundation." Other extremely worthy organizations with which the socially conscious group is affiliated are: "Green Music Group," "Kids Up Front Foundation" and "Ladies First Hockey Foundation," to name a few. And let's not forget that BNL performed at the Canadian "Live 8" concert in Barrie (Ontario) with other such notable homegrown performers as Gordon Lightfoot, Bruce Cockburn, Blue Rodeo, Our Lady Peace, etc. As you recall, other "Live 8" concerts engineered to raise awareness of—and hopefully put an end to—world poverty, simultaneously took place in France, England, Germany, Japan, South Africa and the USA.

In 2008, BNL celebrated their 20th anniversary. But, unfortunately, the band that plays together doesn't always stay together. For, although that was a watershed event for the group, it was also a bittersweet moment as tensions were running high at the same time, resulting in original founding member, Steven Page, departing BNL by mutual agreement, indicating why Tyler Stewart's drum kit now has a large number 4 emblazoned on it. But why don't I let him speak for himself?

After Steven Page's departure, did the band consider finding a replacement for him? "No, there was never any consideration to find a replacement because we all do vocals, play a number of instruments and write. We just wanted to move forward in a healthy, positive way, artistically and with a renewed commitment to each other."

What are some pitfalls of touring that you've encountered? "It's always a battle to eat properly, to not drink too much and to get enough rest. It's not easy trying to sleep at night on a moving tour bus!"

What do you miss most when you're away from Canada? "I miss my family. And in comparison to our crazy US counterparts, I also miss the slower pace, the feeling of safety and that there is less disparity between the rich and the poor."

What was a highlight for you from the 2010 Winter Olympics? "The 2-0 win for our women's hockey team in their final game. They are a great group of inspirational women. A lot of the players are my friends. My wife and my daughter both play hockey."

What was your reaction to the men's final hockey showdown? "Sidney Crosby's winning goal in overtime was an exceptional moment. It was like a Hollywood movie."

What is a dream of yours? "Continuing to do what we love, being paid well, not having to compromise and integrating our dream job with our families."

What is a future goal for you? "To keep making great music, putting on great concerts and to continue to love and respect each other."

Has the band always been a headline act? "Yes, it's a testament to the power of our live shows. We're privileged to be a formidable live act."

Have there been any regrets? "Not being able to maintain our early profile. At one point, our focus was on the big prize, which temporarily took us away from our roots. But now, we're more accessible, we're the guys next door."

What was your most embarrassing career moment? "I don't embarrass easily! But I guess it was our first album cover, the one for *Gordon*."

Although the majority of your songs are original compositions, do you ever cover songs by other artists? "Yes, every so often we'll cover an iconic song like "Material Girl" or "When Doves Cry."

Who are some of your musical influences? "The Beatles, of course. Who didn't they influence?"

When I mentioned an online quote attributed to Sir Paul McCartney regarding BNL—"Their harmonies are right on. They could out-sing us any day of the week. I don't think John and myself ever had the range they do."—Tyler, laughing politely, said he hoped the quote was accurate. When I pushed him to mention any other complimentary remarks, he modestly mentioned that Tom Cochrane had praised the BNL rhythm section and that Neil Young had favourably compared the group's dynamic to the Marx Brothers!

So there you have it folks. For all the latest tour information, band merchandise and musical downloads, simply access this loveable quartet's recently launched, new and improved fan club site, "The Ladies Room." Or contact them via the major social networking avenues. Whatever — just don't miss them barenaked and on stage! O

Photo: © James Michin

~ JOSHUA MILLER

The Top Ten Q & A:

Kelly Rowland *"Our Newest Dance Diva"*

We all know who Kelly Rowland was, but it's a NEW Kelly Rowland! And I LOVE HER! She has dominated the dance charts with one of my favourite songs, "When Love Takes Over," and recently won her first solo Grammy! Kelly headlines GirlBar Dinah Shore Week's 20th Anniversary Saturday, April 3 at the newly renovated Renaissance Grand Ballroom in Palm Springs at 8 p.m.

Other performers confirmed for Girl Bar Dinah Shore Week include R&B powerhouse Kelis, actress/comedian Jennifer Coolidge and singer and guitarist Orianthi, who audiences came to know from Michael Jackson's *This Is It*.

"*When Love Takes Over*" was one of the biggest dance songs of the year. How did winning your own Grammy differ from winning Grammys with Destiny's Child? It's always an honour to receive a Grammy; but once you receive one on your own, it's a sense of validity! It makes me want to go out there and work even harder.

What was the last song that you listened to that you honestly enjoyed? "*Rudeboy*" by Rihanna. I love that song and I love the music video!

What are you currently listening to in your iPod/ mp3 player? Because I am recording my new album, Im listening to myself. It's not an ego thing (laughs). I just don't want to be influenced by any outside source. I want to stay focused and give my fans "me."

Tell me a bit about the sound of your upcoming record. I've really been inspired by David Guetta. I love the energy in the tracks and I love dance music. The new record is going to be dance-fused with urban sounds.

If you had to pick ONE artist to sing with, dead or alive, who would it be? Whitney Houston. She has been in the business for so long and was the person that inspired me to sing.

Is there one celebrity that you are still "star struck" by? Whitney Houston! (laughs) and Sade. I still haven't met her, and, if I met her face to face, I would be speechless; I wouldn't know what to say.

After being in the music business for so long, what keeps you so focused and motivated? I just feel like I'm not done yet. I have so much more to offer my fans. There is so much more to do!

Give us five words that would accurately describe a Kelly Rowland experience on stage. Fun, live vocals, entertaining, and energy.

How does it feel to perform in front of a nearly all female audience? Are you doing anything different in your show because of that? I feel that it's important to be me, wherever I perform. I'm at a point now where I'm comfortable just being myself on stage!

What are you looking forward to most about performing for the girls at Girl Bar Dinah Shore Week? Having lots of fun with my lesbian fans. I love them so much and I can't wait to see them at Girl Bar Dinah Shore Week! Don't be tardy for the party!

Photo: courtesy Joshua Miller.

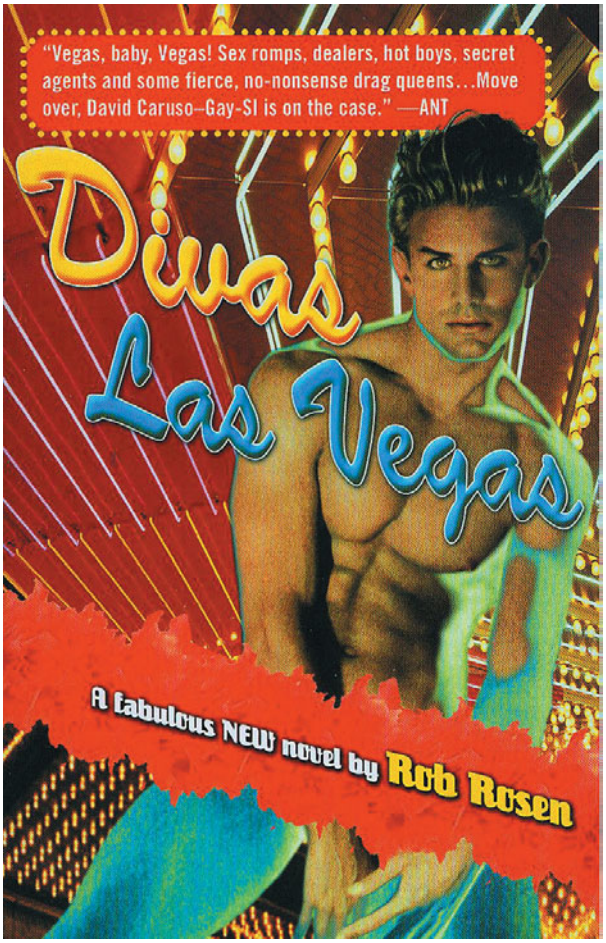
Tickets to GirlBar Dinah Shore are on sale at: **dinahshoreweekend.com**.

For more on the world of Kelly Rowland please visit **www.kellyrowland.com**.

Please visit **www.joshuami11er.com** for more on West Hollywood Nightlife and Gossip! O

Divas Las Vegas

by Rob Rosen © 2009, Cleis Press



You would have never believed it if you hadn't seen it for yourself.

Mere steps into the terminal at McCarran Airport in Las Vegas, there were, indeed, slot machines—rows and rows of them in all their light-flashing, cha-chinging, whooping glory. Just off the plane, you were overjoyed. You were excited. You couldn't dig quarters out of your pocket fast enough.

And, of course, that was just the beginning, because there's lots to do in Sin City—even more, if you're looking for a lost antique vase. But in the book *Divas Las Vegas* by Rob Rosen, an old relic could mean trouble anew.

Adorable men flash in and out of the picture like faulty Vegas light bulbs, and old flames flare up throughout. But, when one of Justin and Em's new boy-toys gets into trouble and vanishes, they realize that it isn't just about the vase any more.

Take two men with a flair for fashion. Add a beautiful bisexual woman, a handful of Middle Eastern hotties, and a chain-smoking cabbie. Mix in several murders and a hopelessly horrid vase. Put them in Sin City and shake gently. Open, and serve on a beach because *Divas Las Vegas* is the perfect escape read.

Author Rob Rosen created a campy, rompish, slightly naughty semi-mystery novel that is hilariously fun, fun, fun. I loved Em so much (and maybe Justin a little more) that I couldn't wait to see what they'd come up with next. This story is so enjoyable, in fact, that you'll almost wish you'd been there.

If you're looking for something light as a headdress feather but as addictive as a one-armed bandit, *Divas Las Vegas* is for you. To miss this good-time novel would be a sin.

Mama Dearest

by E. Lynn Harris © 2009, Karen Hunter Publishing

The minute you saw that child, you knew who she belonged to.

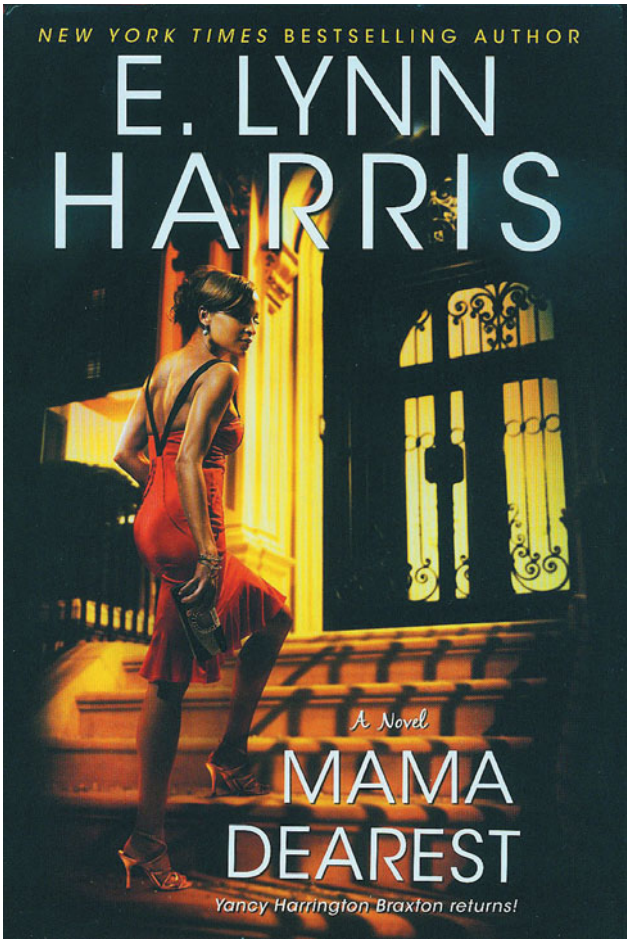
She had the same eyes, same chin, same mannerisms. She wore her hair like her Mama did back in the day—in fact, you could swear the ribbons had been handed down. She even laughed the same way, as if "ha-ha" was genetic. There was no way her Mama could deny that child. The girl was just like her mother.

The apple, they say, doesn't fall far from the tree, and in the new novel *Mama Dearest* by E. Lynn Harris, it sticks around through three generations.

Reminiscent of early Jackie Collins (but more down-to-earth, and with nastier characters), the late author E. Lynn Harris brings high society and low-lifes together in this story of greed, wealth, greed, wrongful payback, and more greed. I loved the way Harris lets the character of Yancey tell her own part, while Ava's story is coolly detached and Madison's is bouncily teenish.

To be sure, E. Lynn Harris will be missed. He died suddenly July 23, 2009 of heart failure.

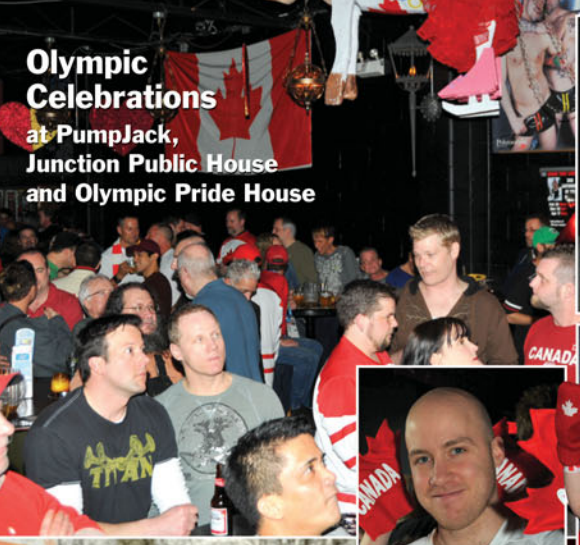
If you're a fan of trash, cash, and flash novels, this one is too fun to miss. For you, *Mama Dearest* is a mother-lode of enjoyment.



VANCOUVER Out & about

Olympic Celebrations

at PumpJack, Junction Public House and Olympic Pride House



Coronation 2010

March 13 at Landmark Hotel

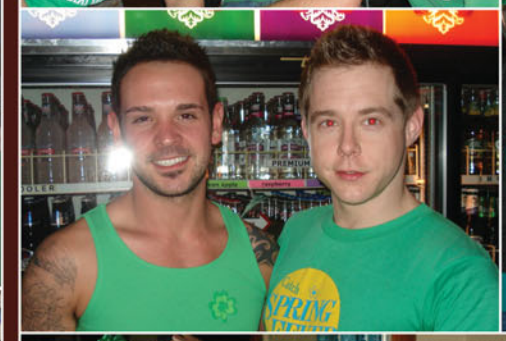
Planning an event in Vancouver? Contact Barry at 604.685.1377 and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: Barry Piersdorff

Out & about TORONTO

Planning an event in Toronto? Contact Jason at jjohnson@outlooks.ca and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: Jason Johnson

St Patrick's Day

March 17 at Churchmouse & Firkin



St. Patrick's Day

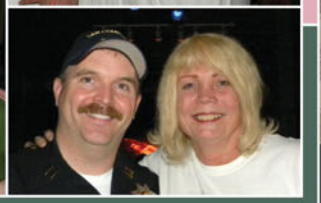
March 17 at Woody's

CALGARY Out & about

Ronnie Burkett
AIDS Calgary
Fundraiser
Mar 15 at Engineered Air Theatre

AIDS Calgary staff Nikhat, Kristen, Tracie & Capri

The Eagle
8th Anniversary
Feb 20



A Red Carpet Affair
Fundraiser
Feb 26 at
Texas Lounge

Planning an event in Calgary? Contact Perry at pmah@outlooks.ca and he'll see about covering it in Out & About.

Centre Coordinator Cory Cardinal (3rd from left) and friends

Pride Week
at Mount Royal University
February 22 - 26

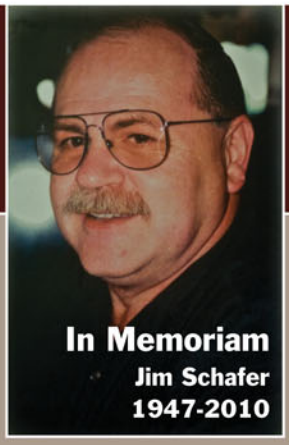
Manhunt Roadtrip
Feb 27 at the Eagle

Out & about EDMONTON

Planning an event in Edmonton? Contact jackson@jacksonphotografix.com and he'll see about covering it in Out & About. Photos by: jacksonphotografix

Edmonton Queer Professionals
at Suede

Organizers Christopher and Todd



In Memoriam
Jim Schafer
1947-2010

Pretty People Get Nasty
Mar 12 at Play

April Horoscope

April is full of planetary oomph as both Mercury and Saturn retrograde. Our thoughts turn into actions that can become our undoing. Will we become April fools? Only if we don't know enough to get out of those April showers!

ARIES (MARCH 21 - APRIL 20)

Proud Rams have their eye on the bottom line and want to use their gotten gains for a variety of useful purposes. But, before you start to spend your spree, see if what you are buying is what you really want. It may turn out that what you think you want and need is not what you want and need at all. But the lure of the glittery prize may be too much to resist. Become resistible.

TAURUS (APRIL 21 - MAY 21)

April gets off to a galloping start when most of your latent projects begin to sprout and bear fruit. Will you allow the harvest to ripen on the vine, or will you impatiently pluck them? Give yourself some time to savour the moment and survey the landscape. There is still too much going on and still in flux. Queer Bulls are good at waiting and seeing. So, wait and see.

GEMINI (MAY 22 - JUNE 21)

Expect a few surprises now, when those whom you trusted may upend things for you unintentionally or otherwise. This can be a good thing—there is something liberating about being able to peel back the curtain and take a peek at the all powerful Wizard. Knowing your demons is the first step in conquering them —and they are not as fearsome as you might think.

CANCER (JUNE 22 - JULY 23)

Get with the program, gay Crab. Friends are urging you to get involved in a variety of activities. There are many possible outlets for fun and platonic frolic. So much so that you can feel overwhelmed and a bit stymied. But, shake yourself out of your stupor, make a choice and see how well it can pan out. You know the old saying: No venture, no summer romance.

LEO (JULY 24 - AUGUST 23)

Your corporate ambitions can get the better of you this April when the lure of the corner office becomes a be all and end all proposition. Success is nice—but at what cost? Measure and weigh the consequences of your professional action and see if you can better maneuvre the shark-filled waters unobtrusively. There is no sense putting a Lion on the menu at this time.

VIRGO (AUGUST 24 - SEPTEMBER 23)

Thinking of a spring fling this April? Why not? Travel is not only highlighted, it is underlined. Expansion in any form is the key to your happiness and self-fulfillment. But, hurry before your best laid plans are overtaken by the routine of daily life. Of course, you can always envision yourself lazing on a faraway beach from the comfort of your desk as you eat lunch.

LIBRA (SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 23)

Love is in the air—or is it lust? April can be a month of sensual pleasure, where you not only feel your oats but the oats of a few other studs in the field. Gay Libras are more charismatic than usual. Make good use of this push-me-pull-you energy to intensify current relationships or to create new ones. You have everything going for you. Grab it before it gets up and goes. Oops!

SCORPIO (OCTOBER 24 - NOVEMBER 22)

Relationships undergo some changes this April, so be prepared for anything. Are you happy in your current circumstances? If not, see if there are ways to make it better. You have the ways and means. If you are searching for your dreamboat, check out a few piers and see who cruises by. But, be choosy, lest you wind up with so much flotsam and jetsam.

SAGITTARIUS (NOVEMBER 23 - DECEMBER 22)

April will be as busy as ever for you on the job. No matter how hard you try to manage the workplace frenzy, your workload continues apace and creates a whirlwind of effort, with less and less results. Focus, gay Archer. Don't allow yourself to get distracted. Or, better yet, try to find ways to delegate the more onerous tasks. You make a better despot than a serf anyway.

CAPRICORN (DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 20)

Fun will have a way of getting totally out of hand this April. You are especially creative and are also locked into a party circuit that leads you to dissipation and utter exhaustion. This is not necessarily a bad thing, pink Cap. Sometimes you have to let loose and see where the fates lead you. Who knows? They may lead you to Rome Italy…or is it Rome New York…?

AQUARIUS (JANUARY 21 - FEBRUARY 19)

Home may feel like a refuge this April; but in fact it is an opportunity for you to get your domestic surroundings in order. What is it that you need to do to feel secure, comfortable and happy? Let's check the list: There are long forsaken household chores to be done and long festering family issues to be handled. Are you up for it? Good. Get going, Aqueerius.

PISCES (FEBRUARY 20 - MARCH 20)

Guppies have a lot on their mind but think; before you speak this April. It is a good time to review your point of view. Carefully consider your opinions and measure the possible effect they may have on the intended recipient. Why push the point now? There is plenty of time to hone your personal message and plan your media campaign so it hits the target. Then, ouch!

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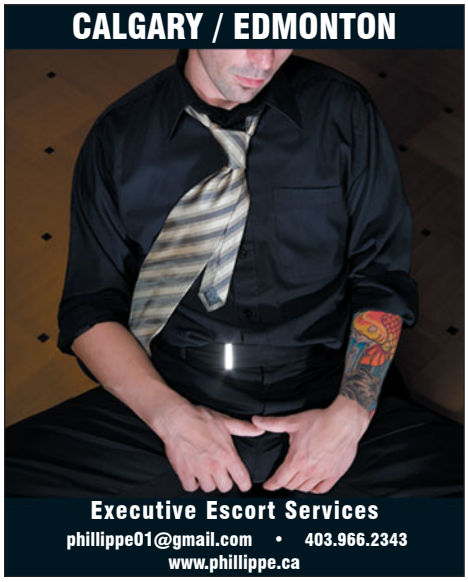
A.S.K.
Calgary Kinky Fleat Market
Forest Heights Community Centre, 4909 Forego Ave. SE
Saturday, April 17, 2010
11:00 am to 5:00 pm • Admission $4.00

More information at **403-398-9968**
or at the **Monday Night Munch**
albertasocieteyforkink@hotmail.com



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Calgary, AB
Entrance at Back of Building

APRIL EVENTS

Karaoke every Tuesday and Saturday

ISCCA Drag Shows Thursday April 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th

Theme Party Friday April 30th
See posters in bar for details

Welcome Western Cup Participants

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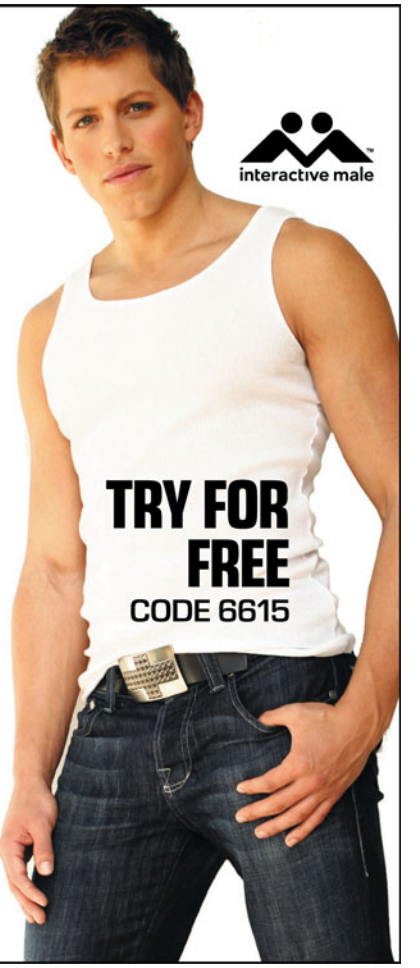

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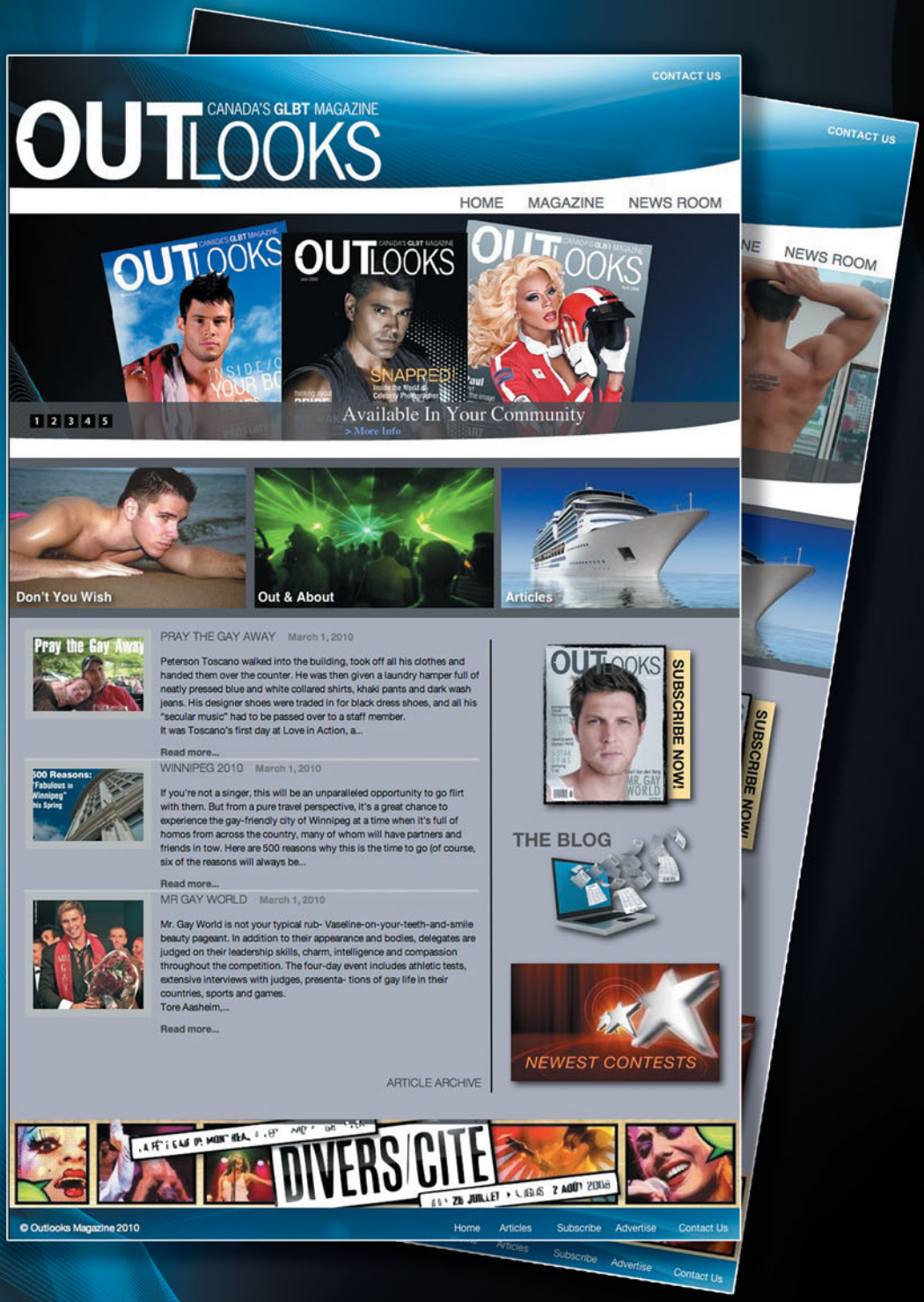

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